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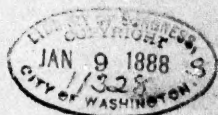
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A THEOLOGICAL ROMANCE.

REMINISCENCES
OF
A PREACHER.

35
BY WILLIAM McDONNELL,

AUTHOR OF

*"Exeter Hall," "Heathens of the Heath," "Family
Creeds," "The Beautiful Snow," &c.*



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REMINISCENCES
OF
A PREACHER.

CHAPTER I.

A REMARKABLE PROVIDENCE.

OF a truth we may say "that our life seems as but a dream, and our past years but a fleeting vision." Our days pass almost imperceptibly away, some like swift shadows over a troubled sea; others like flitting gleams before a coming storm. We may rise in the morning full of hope and expectation; at glowing noon, in the fervid heat of the day, we may often find ourselves encompassed by unexpected difficulties engendering anxious thought; when the quiet evening steals upon us we may too often feel languid and discouraged; and, when the night closes upon the scene, we may frequently experience all the regrets, the depression, and, it may be, the pangs resulting from the bitterest disappointment.

How exquisite is the feeling which arises when we see the dawn steal from the womb of night, lingering for a moment on the mountain top, ere it paces slowly down to leave a ray in every dew-drop, or send out its fragrant zephyr messengers to whisper away the shades

from the valley, and to pencil in the dim light the faintest form of the sleeping flowers! Then how glorious to see the sun appear in mellow splendor, stretching his wide beams along the horizon, spreading a blush of gold over the slumbering sea, sending its early ray to burnish the hill tops, and to fringe the distant cloud, which seems in such a state of repose, with a border of radiance!

These are attractive scenes which have a tendency at such an hour to engender hope and awaken the most agreeable anticipations; but long ere night, the lone cloud which appeared so harmless in the sky, may have spread out its black wings wide, and still wider, and then, as it were, letting free its pent-up demons of evil, we witness the woeful revel of death and devastation which too often follows.

Many a life, like many a day, has thus begun with the fairest hopes, but to be prematurely shortened by clouds, storms, and disaster.

In the varied, the variegated, and the solemn scenes through which I have passed during a long term of years, there are some things so strange and startling, that a record of them might seem to many but the wild circumstances of a frenzied imagination. However, be this as it may, they are those which relate to human life, and as events occur almost every day which make facts stronger than fiction, those which I have to present may perhaps be interesting to the ordinary reader, suggestive to the philanthropist, and admonitory to the reckless and inexperienced.

I was scarcely more than seven years of age when I was designed for the ministry. My mother was a very religious woman, who thought that her only son should be dedicated to the Lord, and especially trained for his service. She was most desirous that I should spend my life as an ambassador from God to his fellow-creature

man, and, to this intent, her prayers were almost constant that I should experience an early change of heart, and that I should be endowed with gifts and graces sufficient to make the momentous message which I was destined to bring to perishing sinners peculiarly acceptable. Apart from her pious desire that I should become one of God's ministering servants, she felt it incumbent on her, as a debt of gratitude, to give me up willingly and entirely to the great work of spreading the Glad Tidings,—gratitude for what she considered a divine interposition which saved me from almost instant death.

As it is an event which must ever be foremost in my memory, I shall give an account of it here.

On a very sultry day more than three score years ago, I was playing in a field with a little school-fellow. We had wandered away some distance from home, and had thought of returning, for the sky had become almost suddenly darkened, and the appearance of the heavens so portentous, that we had already felt great fear. Indeed, children of our age at the time might well have been frightened, for I never before saw such gloom overhead, and many persons, even of mature age, would probably have been alarmed at the dread and ominous aspect of the massive black clouds which were above us. Big drops now began to fall, and as we were near no house, shed, or other place of shelter, we rushed towards a large tree which stood close to a wet ditch near a corner of the field. We had barely got under this when the rain came down like one vast heavy stream, drenching us in a few moments to the very skin. A sudden darkness appeared to fall around us, the wind blew with great violence, and the loud thunder shook the earth where we stood. My companion trembled with fear, and commenced to cry aloud, his voice being hardly audible in the uproar of the elements. The zigzag lightning, as it frequently spent its vivid flash, left us

in momentary darkness, and then again quickly followed the thunder in deafening reports sufficient to fill many a stout heart with terror. My young friend in his terrible dread clutched me, the poor little fellow being apparently distracted. Flash after flash followed, when suddenly I imagined that I had received a violent blow, and I must have fallen senseless to the earth.

How long I lay there I know not; it was some hours afterward before I recovered my senses. I found myself in a strange place. It was an apartment in a humble farm-house, and when I looked around I could see a number of persons, all apparently strangers. As I turned a glance toward the open door, a terrible sight met my eyes. On the bare floor was stretched the body of the little boy who was with me. He must have been struck dead in a moment. The tree under which we stood had been shattered to pieces by the lightning, and we were discovered lying under some broken branches.

Some person present chanced to know me, and I was taken home that evening. I could not walk, for one side of my body was quite benumbed, and it was some days afterwards before I was restored. My praying mother considered this a miraculous deliverance; not a doubt of this was in her mind, and in her deep gratitude for my preservation, she then and there promised the Lord that, from that day forth, I should be wholly dedicated to His service. Since that far-back time, I never see a storm, hear the thunder, or watch the vivid lightning, but it reminds me of the sad fate of my little companion—the mysterious Providence which it was said had preserved me must therefore have destroyed *him!*

CHAPTER II.

A RECKLESS CAREER

I said I was an only son. I was at this time, in fact, the only child. I remember a little red-cheeked, fair-haired, blue-eyed maiden, who used to have a doll with flaxen hair, so like her own. Ah! how I can still remember her! She was my sister, the only one I ever had. Our few years together—now comparatively like days or hours—were so full of soft sunshine, like that of the mild spring-time, or, in a degree, like the azure which I was told was around the Great Throne, near to which she is to be happy forevermore. Little Sarah, two years my senior, went away. Oh! how I missed her! She was called hence to take her place, as was said, among the angels in heaven, and I was left alone.

Many a Sabbath afterwards I used to visit her grave while the sun was shining and the bells ringing for service. And when I saw children, brothers and sisters, enter the church hand in hand, I would think of her, and my eyes would fill with tears, and my heart be ready to burst. What a terrible chastening is the rupture of such human ties! How hard it is to admit that such afflictions may be for our good! Yet submission to these is the stern admonition. After an absence of some years, when I revisited the churchyard again, the little mound which marked her resting-place had been removed, probably to make room for some other tenant, and I turned away in sadness, never to look at the spot again.

When I was about nineteen years of age, a very pious man named Shaw, who had been set apart for the work

of preaching the gospel by the founder of Methodism himself, was appointed to a circuit in London, in which city we then resided. My mother got acquainted with him in Birmingham, where we had had our home up to the time of my father's death, then scarcely two years. Mr. Shaw was a widower. He had a daughter who was about three years my junior, and rather a good-looking, innocent girl. He lived in a house but a few steps from our own. He soon became very popular, people crowded to hear him, and he induced many to join the Society who had previously lived very carelessly, and with scarcely a thought as to their condition in a future state. He often visited us, and, as the custom then was, often prayed for us—long, loud prayers that were sometimes almost boisterous, causing me often to shrink at the sound of his long-drawn words. He often came, and it was not a great while until I began to suspect that there was a feeling of more than ordinary friendship between him and my mother. I must say that this gave me the greatest uneasiness, and in spite of all I could do, I began to entertain a dislike for our preacher, whose visits had now become more frequent. In fact, for some reason for which I cannot account, he was a person I could never cordially esteem, and at this time in particular I felt indignant that any one, let him be esteemed ever so pious, should come between my mother and myself.

Things went on this way for about half a year longer. One afternoon, when she and I were alone together, she asked, "Harry, how is it that you do not attend meetings as regularly as formerly?"

Here was a coveted opportunity to introduce a subject which, from an unaccountable diffidence, I had hitherto felt a difficulty in making any attempt to mention.

"Because," I replied, "I am tired of Mr. Shaw's preaching. He comes here now nearly every evening

under of Methodism in London, in which I got acquainted with him. He had our home up to us scarcely two years. I had a daughter who was rather a good-looking, but a few steps from vulgar, people crowded by to join the Society carelessly, and with ambition in a future state. My mother then was, often that were sometimes ten to shrink at the sight of him. He often came, and it was to suspect that there was a friendship between them that this gave me the idea of all I could do, I was our preacher, whose presence. In fact, for some time, he was a person I met at this time in particular, let him be esteemed between my mother and me for half a year longer. We were alone together, and that you do not attend to it? " I wish to introduce a subject of confidence, I had hitherto attempted to mention. I was tired of Mr. Shaw's preaching nearly every evening

to give us one of his long prayers, and one of his wearisome lectures. He seems to have more spare time for us than for others who need him more; and as he must be away on Sunday, and as we can have the place to ourselves on that day at least, I keep from chapel to avoid meeting him—I'm tired of him!"

"Oh! Harry, what a spirit you manifest! You really surprise me. Mr. Shaw is a good man, a God-fearing man, whose heart is in his work. He is greatly attached to you, and wishes to do what he can to fit you for the high calling which is before you."

"Mother," I replied, looking at her with all the sternness I could command, "it seems to me that you know more of that man's heart and of his attachments than I wish you knew. To follow his calling would now be hateful. I never want to be a preacher. Do you think I'm blind? Cannot I see what others see, and hear what others say?"

"And pray what dare they say?" demanded she in a tone almost as stern as my own.

"Why, that you are infatuated with Shaw, and that you, after the fashion of certain other women, run after your preacher and neglect your home. That's what they say."

"And you have listened credulously to such a slander, Harry?" asked she calmly.

"How could I help it, mother? It is common talk among the members of the Society. Even the bare rumor of such a thing would make me miserable."

"Do you believe me capable of doing wrong," she inquired, "wrong at my time of life?"

"I wish to believe nothing against you; but, mother, how can I shut my eyes to what I must see? I sometimes fancy I can notice a strange intimacy between you and Shaw—lately in particular—and I cannot control my dislike to the man to whom you seem so partial."

"Oh! Harty!" exclaimed she, feelingly, "how you mistake me, and how you misunderstand him! But I have done wrong in one way. I should have told you before; I now admit this."

When she said these words the blood rushed to my brain as if I were about to hear something terrible. She held my hand, which was now almost trembling, and she repeated, "I *have* done wrong. I wished to tell you, but he forbade my doing so for a time. I shall tell you now."

"Good God, mother!" cried I, starting up in an excited manner. "What have you to tell me?"

She still held my hand. She was nervous, and now almost unable to speak above a whisper. "Be calm, my son," she replied in a low voice, "and you shall hear." She begged of me to be seated by her side. I saw her eyes fill with tears, but anticipating some hateful revelation I was as restless as ever.

"You know, Harry," she continued in the same undertone, "you know that in fulfilling my desire respecting yourself, you would soon have to leave me. You passed a fair examination at the late district meeting, your name has been entered, and I have been assured that the next Conference will send you out on your first year's probation. Now as you may be sent to travel in some remote place, fifty or a hundred miles from me, and as the little means at my disposal would not permit me to leave here and accompany you, I should be left alone."

"Oh! I see," said I, interrupting her; "this is the artful way the case has been put. Somebody wants to get me out of the way."

"Now, patience, Harry," almost pleaded my mother. "Is it not the truth? You know it is. I should be left alone without a protector, and, anticipating this, Mr. Shaw, who, you must admit, has been particularly kind

feelingly, "how you stand him! But I could have told you

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to you and me, made me—made me—an offer—an offer of marriage."

I sprang from my seat again. "Mother, mother!" I cried out, "I cannot listen to this. If you ever think seriously of this infamous proposal, we part forever, we surely shall. More to please you than to gratify any inclination of my own, I have consented to go on a circuit as a travelling preacher, but if such result is to follow what would be at most but a temporary parting, I shall remain here and go at some more acceptable calling. This is unbearable! Let the dotting old hypocritical fool live with his daughter."

Here was a pause. I was more excited than ever, and though the tears had left my mother's eyes, her face was very pale, and she resumed in a voice still more humble and subdued, "It is too late, Harry!"

"It is not," I cried impetuously. "It is not; it must not be."

"It is too late," she continued. "I made the subject one of prayerful consideration; I have been doing every thing for the best—yes, for the best; and more than a week ago I was—I was—married, and Mr. Shaw is now my husband, and—your father."

"My father! Great heavens! By —! the wretch shall be no father of mine! And see," cried I, raising my clenched fist, "By —! you shall be no more my mother, I shall be no more your son, and we part forever from this very hour! Away, woman!" shouted I, as I rudely pushed her from me when she tried to clasp me once more in her arms.

Oh! the remorse which that last parting has brought me! Oh! the sorrow of heart which has been mine for years! Oh! the deep penitence which has followed from my reckless haste, from the mortal wounds which I gave, from the profane oaths which I uttered, from the heart which I withered, and from the life which I

shortened! Oh! my mother!—couldst thou but see the bitter tears I have since shed; couldst thou but know how I have wandered a wretched fugitive in hunger and thirst, wishing for death; couldst thou but know that thy last appealing look is forever before my eyes, and that almost ever since the day of our separation I have been patiently awaiting that coming hour which may bring us together again to let me see thy smile of reconciliation in the promised kingdom of the blest!

CHAPTER III.

FOR THE TENTED FIELD.

I rushed from her presence—Oh! God! never to look on her face again! What madness! But out I rushed! I was excited and feverish and wild. I knew not and cared not which way I went. I passed along hurriedly through crowded streets as indifferent to those around as if I were but among trees in a vast forest. I was too agitated to think of suicide, and I passed over London Bridge without a thought of the kind. Had I been calmer, and had it been darker, I cannot say but that I might possibly have taken a plunge in that Lethean stream which has brought oblivion to so many; or had I been in some lonely place where I could see moonbeams stretched out like a shroud upon a sheet of placid water, I might have been easily tempted to hide beneath the shining lake, and let my life and my mortified feelings pass away together.

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But it was not to be thus; the great Tempter was not, I suppose, permitted to prevail. I must have walked some miles before I really knew what I was doing. In one respect the violent exercise had a good effect,—I got rid of my great excitement, and though I was still troubled with a whirl of angry ideas, I was collected enough to discover that I was wandering about without any definite purpose.

It was now nearly dark. There had been a drizzling rain for some time, and I began to feel that I was tired and uncomfortable. I knew not where I was, for I had taken a tortuous course through streets I had seldom or never before travelled. I now instinctively slackened my pace, and turning slowly down another street I came to a halt, and leaned against a stone post in front of what appeared to be a large rum shop or gin palace. Previously to this I might a few times have tasted wine, or weak punch, for at that time no such thing as a temperance society had, I believe, ever been heard of; but now, when I saw men and women in the brilliantly-lighted tap-room drink glass after glass, when I heard songs and laughter within, I felt an almost irresistible desire for strong liquor. It was, I thought, just the thing for me at the moment—the stronger and more stupifying the better.

In I went at once, and without knowing whether I had a single penny in my possession, I boldly asked for gin. I had made up my mind to have it, were I even obliged to leave some article of my apparel in pledge for payment, for I had heard of this having been often done by others. I was however relieved from such a necessity, for on searching my pockets I found a silver pencil-case given me by my mother, and two shillings in small change, a balance which remained after having purchased that very day a new edition of "Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest," a book which she was exceedingly fond of reading.

I drank the liquor eagerly, and then sat for a few moments looking at those around me who were freely indulging in the same kind of beverage. There were not many respectable-looking persons in the place. A few young women could be seen here and there in tawdry dress, but mostly all were of the laboring class, rather sottish in appearance, and spending lavishly the money so toilsomely earned. Some had their wives and even their children present, and I could see that a few of these were at times indulged with more than one sip of stuff strong and fiery enough to scald their tender skin. It was evident, however, that this was not the first time that these little ones had been quieted by such a prescription; it soon had its pacifying effect, and I think if it did any more than was required, it was perhaps to make them eager for another taste of the blistering fluid, and, worse than that, it struck me that nearly all present, male and female, young and old, were more or less intoxicated.

A few hours previously I should have been shocked to witness such a scene, but now I was almost indifferent. I had entered the place for a special purpose to drown my senses, and to become, if possible, as drunk and as stupid as most of those around. I was about to call for another glass when an old white-haired man hobbled towards me from an opposite corner, and with a haggard smile and besotted look took a place near me. His appearance at the moment was not very agreeable, and I felt inclined to move away from him. His clothes were tattered and rather filthy, his face wrinkled and blotched, his eyes bleary and blood-shot, and, altogether, he looked like one fast approaching the last stage of squalor and intemperance. He was stooped, and while he bent upon a stick, his long hands seemed to be palsied, and when he was about to speak he looked at me sideways over his shoulder with a lingering expression,

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"Come, old fellow, leave here, cut stick," said one of the waiters approaching him.

"Ah! do permit me to remain, just for a little, please do," said he. "This young man, this lad, is a stranger you see, and I have a few words to say to him, only a few. Please do."

He spoke with a husky voice, and in a manner so entreating, that I somehow felt pity for the old man, and anxious at the time to have some one speak to me so as to divert my thoughts, I told the person to let him stay, and rightly judging that he would drink if he got it, I forthwith ordered two glasses of rum.

"A fine lad," said he, with the same wretched smile. "I thought you would be generous, you looked so like it. You see I tremble with the cold"—and he cast a side glance at his shaking hand, wishing no doubt to have me think that it was the cold alone which affected him—"and something strong is just what I want to make me all right. Oh! you're a fine, generous lad."

"How came you to lose your little finger?" I asked, looking down at his left hand, which was pressing on the small table in front of his. There was also the mark of a gash on the back of the same hand.

"Oh! that?" said he, looking at his hand with a careless air. He first drank the liquor, and while trying to wipe his lips with the back of his shaking hand, replied, "Well, as you're kind enough to inquire—let me see. It must be a matter of four or five years ago since that happened."

"The reason I ask," I continued, "is that I once had the misfortune to injure a person by accident, and he lost his finger, and the back of his hand was also cut as yours appears to have been. But he's dead long ago, I believe."

"This was a kind of accident, too," said he, after a few moments' pause. "A little fellow that I used to think a great deal of, suddenly closed a door on my hand, and my little finger got so crushed that it had to be cut off." And then he said reflectively, "I wish I had died before it got well again!"

He was too dull or too absorbed to notice my movement of surprise. "Your name is not Mandrake, is it?" I asked in a hesitating manner. "It cannot possibly be that?"

"Oh! how do you know my name?" he asked, in a kind of astonished way, his head now shaking worse than before. "Did you know Harry?"

"None knew him better," I replied. "We were school-fellows." I did not wish to admit that I was the person. He evidently did not know me, and I felt that I must have grown and been changed in appearance beyond his recognition.

Ah! said he, "he was the boy, but it was a mere accident, and I could not blame him. He must have told you of it?"

"Yes, he did. But you must have been very unfortunate since that time. He said that you had been his Sunday school teacher, and I think a class leader among the Methodists."

He now seemed a little ashamed, and his eyes were bent to the floor. "I was, I was, but don't tell me of that," said he, evidently pained by his reflections. "Like others, I was too confident, and I fell—you see how low."

Almost reckless as I had been up to that moment, I felt greatly shocked by his admission. "You must have grown old before your time," said I, looking at his face.

"I am not so old as I look," he slowly replied, "but my misfortunes and what I have suffered, and," said he, in a low, trembling voice, "some pangs of con-

science that still remain would be enough to make any man old and withered-looking and wretched."

"Have you no means of living?" I inquired.

"I am a beggar. I am worse than a hungry pauper. I have such a desire for this," said he, raising his glass from the table, "that I would steal to get strong drink. I might even do worse to satisfy my craving. I am a cast-away,—one fallen from grace,—Lost! Oh! God!—lost!" Here, completely overcome, tears filled his eyes, and he held down his head and wept.

While looking that moment at the old man, so prematurely aged, so sad and so forlorn, had a merciful Providence sent me then one good adviser, I should have taken any outstretched hand and perhaps have returned to ask pardon of my weeping mother. But for some hidden reason this was not to be, and what followed only made me more determined to pursue my own wrong, heedless course, even were it to perdition.

I felt for him and said a few compassionate words. "Cannot you return?" I asked. "Those who once knew you in better days might help. I know that Harry always respected you and would be sorry to see you as you now are."

"He? Poor lad! he does not know how I betrayed the trust his mother reposed in me; if he did, he might hate me."

I was almost startled, for I had never until this heard of any such thing, and of course was eager to know more of the matter.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, I can tell you. I feel that it would now relieve my mind to tell somebody. I knew his father, and I also knew that he had saved a little money, sufficient if carefully managed to keep his son and wife from want should he be taken from them. I was supposed to be a friend,—one of the most intimate; a member of the

same Society, and, as you said, the leader of a class—the one to which they belonged. Well, after she was left a widow, I chanced to be in great necessity for a small loan, and she willingly obliged me. I subsequently got another, until, time after time, by specious promises, she having the utmost confidence in me, I managed to get within a few pounds all the money she had. Seeing that I was on the brink of ruin, and anxious to get the last penny, in hopes, like a gambler, that even the last throw might enable me to win back that which was now, I might say, lost, I put on a fair face, and told her that an opportunity for success was within my reach; that as I owed her a debt of gratitude for her great kindness, and that as my regard for her had so increased, I could show it in no more sincere manner than to offer her marriage.”—

Here I almost started from my seat, but in order to hear him out I managed to remain quiet,—

“My real object,” continued he, “being by this means to get the little she had left. She refused me at once. Nothing I could say would alter her determination, and when I informed her sometime afterwards that I had but little hopes of ever being able to repay her, the poor woman was in great distress on account of the loss of her little fund,—distress more in relation to the loss it would be to her son, on whom her heart was fixed, than to herself, and when she discovered my real character, the only favor she asked was that all knowledge of the matter should be kept from Harry.”

Having already felt the effects of the strong liquor, I became more easily excited. “You have informed him yourself, you old wretch!” cried I, seizing him suddenly by the collar and casting him from me. He fell heavily on the matted floor. I could have cursed him and struck him and kicked him at the moment, but being really ashamed to strike one so old and feeble, I spat

upon him where he lay. I then hurriedly left the place, indignant at his knavery and presumption, and incensed with a bitter feeling that my mother should have been so deceived and insulted.

The night air had but little effect on my heated brain. Things seemed to whirl around me, and for some moments my thoughts were quite confused. I gradually began to think, and the prominent aggravating idea returned, having lost none of its exasperating power. "I see how it is," I muttered, as I walked on at a quick pace, "but she hasn't mended matters by marrying that other pious swindler, Shaw. It is scandalous. He no doubt thought she had a little money, and, like that other God-fearing scoundrel, wanted to get hold of it. He'll find his mistake, but that's poor comfort now. Any way I'm off, and I shall never trouble them."

In a kind of half-crazed mood I hastened onward, and then I remember came harassing doubts—doubts of the honesty of many leading professors of religion, doubts concerning religion itself, and then doubts, alas! about the actual existence of an Almighty Being. Oh! many an hour have I since thought what stumbling blocks are thrown in the way of the young and inexperienced; what reproach has been brought on Christianity, and what numerous shipwrecks of faith there have been, and fear still must be, in consequence of the bad example shown by backsliding professors, and even by certain preachers of the Word itself! My doubts at the time made me so desperate, that I was, in a way, perfectly careless of what might next happen to me.

It was now dark, but I went through the dimly-lighted streets without any definite purpose. I had just turned another corner when right in front of me was another gin shop. I saw a crowd outside the door, but pushing my way through, I got into the tap-room, and I had but just seated myself when a half-drunken

recruiting sergeant, or one apparently so, tapped me on the shoulder. He and a few other soldiers had been there for some time in order to try and get recruits, and this was perhaps the reason why so many persons had collected outside the door, looking with curious eyes at the proceedings.

"Here's another fine young fellow," said the sergeant approaching me and laying his hand upon my shoulder. "What say you, my gallant lad? The King wants men, tall, lusty chaps like you, to drive 'Bony' back to Elba or to the devil! Only say that you'll serve his Majesty, and you can have his bounty, besides your choice of artillery, cavalry, or grenadier. Here, strike up, boys," turning to a fife and to a little drummer at his side, and in a moment or two we were almost deafened in the confined room by the shrill fife and the rattling drum giving us the tune of the "British Grenadiers," the sergeant meanwhile beating time on a table with his cane.

"That will do, that will do," said he, when they had merely played the first part of the tune.

The crowd outside now pressed closer around the door, and two or three more young men entered.

"Come, landlord," called the sergeant, "let's have another treat, and while you are drawing the best stuff you can give us, I want any young spirited fellow present willing to serve his Majesty to step right up here and drink his health."

The liquor was soon placed on the table, and without any hesitation I took a glass and swallowed it to the health of "His Most Gracious Majesty, King George the Third. Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The little drummer gave an accompanying roll, and when this was done I felt myself still more excited, and almost a soldier already. This was the kind of scene that just suited me at the moment. I followed the exam-

ple of a dozen others who had just taken the shilling. I had actually enlisted and become a recruit, and by the time we had another round of liquor from the serjeant, whom I now proudly looked upon as the dearest friend I had on earth, I was sufficiently stimulated to join in the last uproarious toast given by the serjeant—

"Boys, here's to the fortune of war—a gold chain or a wooden leg!—Hip, hip, hip, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!"

CHAPTER IV.

QUATRE BRAS.

We were marched off together and found quarters that night in a barrack. Next morning the other recruits and myself were sent off to Chatham, where we were put in uniform and kept for about three weeks at constant hard drill. There were a great many of us, several having been sent forward from other recruiting stations. Most of the young fellows who had enlisted were apparently a reckless set, ready for any enterprise, good or bad. Some had evidently lived useless, dissipated lives, having spent the last penny of which they had been possessed. Others who had been struggling with numerous difficulties had at last given up, as it were, in despair, and accepted the only available refuge, a soldier's life; while many more, like myself, had enlisted under the influence of anger, or excitement, or disappointment of some kind, and all seemed indifferent as to what was likely to follow in the future.

Among the many so strangely thrown together, I had the gratification of falling in with an old school-fellow, who was a few years my senior, and, situated as we

were, the pleasure of our chance meeting was mutual. I had not seen him for a long time, and of course we little expected to come across each other under such circumstances. I must say that when I tried to give some reason for my enlistment, I felt rather ashamed and embarrassed and gave anything but the true cause for my leaving home as I had. Bruce Monroe, for that was his name, was more candid with me, and what he said gave me the highest opinion of his disinterestedness and kindness of heart, and besides this there was a touch of romance connected with his little history.

His father, he said, had been for some months in very poor health, rendering him unable to follow his ordinary avocation. His mother had had not only to attend her sick husband, but also to wait upon her daughter, who was afflicted with that almost fatal disease, consumption, and who was not expected to survive much longer. There was another child, the youngest, a boy of about thirteen, who had to remain constantly at home to assist his mother in her onerous duties. In connection with this, Bruce had been for some time partly out of employment. He was a printer by trade. He had borne an excellent character for honesty and industry, but the times were so hard, at least in his line of business, that the little he could make by an occasional day's work in some office was quite insufficient to meet not only his own requirements, but the greater demands of those who were so dear to him at home.

A year or so before this, when things seemed prosperous, he had become engaged to an excellent young woman. The attachment was mutual, and they were to have been married had matters been more favorable. But when trouble came, when difficulties only increased, when he found himself unable to assist his mother and those naturally depending on him, he resolved to accept the only chance he had to better his condition and be of

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service to his suffering relatives. Discouraged as he had hitherto been, he saw no other way to help them but to enlist and accept the bounty which was offered for recruits at that pressing period.

Poor Bruce was very reluctant to take this step. He was greatly grieved that he should have to do anything which would oblige him to leave home and part from the girl to whom he had pledged his faith, but the necessity was urgent, and though he disliked a soldier's life, he sacrificed his own feelings for the good of others, in the hope that it would not be long until he should be able to return and have an opportunity of doing something better for them. Upon receipt of the government bounty, or what was left of it after certain extortionate fees, deductions, and absurd charges had been taken therefrom, he had a sum of nearly three pounds, which he immediately enclosed to his mother. He could not bear to call and take leave of her or of any one else, but he forwarded a kind and affecting letter giving the reasons for his departure. I would cheerfully have given him the most part, or even the whole of the bounty which I had received, but he would not hear of any such proposal. I made the money useful, however, in another way. By means of a donation to our drill sergeant, we got him to put us in the same foot regiment, which was then at the seat of war, and in the same company; and a small amount was expended to procure some little necessities beyond those to which common soldiers were entitled.

The startling news of the escape of Napoleon from Elba awoke most of the great powers of Europe to a sense of danger. He who was thought to have been completely subdued was abroad again, having been escorted from Cannes to Paris by an increasing number of enthusiastic and devoted adherents. A treaty was therefore at once entered into by Great Britain, Prussia,

and Austria, and other States were invited to join in order to overwhelm entirely the ambitious "disturber of nations"; and the sound of warlike preparations was heard far and near. Many an unwilling man was forced to leave his field, his forge, his fireside, and his family, so that the fearful butchery of war might again be recommenced. Napoleon, who evidently cared but little for human life, was again most active. His energetic appeals were heard, and while thousands flocked to his banners, thousands more were obliged to leave the occupations of peaceful industry to satisfy the insatiable cravings of one who was but little influenced by regard for the terrible misery he might bring upon others.

In a short time, by the most incredible efforts, Napoleon was again at the head of an army of 130,000 men, the finest in the French service, which included 25,000 cavalry, said to be then the best in the world, and 300 pieces of artillery. Well might the wearied and war-worn nations of Europe tremble at such preparations. But the necessity was urgent. The man who was reckless as to the number of slaughtered, so long as his supremacy and dictatorship was established, must be considered dangerous to civilization and human society, and must be overcome and forever kept under control.

The enlistments throughout the United Kingdom were therefore numerous. In every town the recruiting sergeant and his assistants marched about with fife and drum, collecting young men for the army, and detachments were almost every day sent off to add to the number of troops already in the field.

It was a cloudy, disagreeable evening on the 15th of June, 1815, that we joined our regiment in Belgium. It was plain from what we could hear and see that we should soon have to face the enemy, one rather to be feared than despised, and to have our skill and courage tested on the battle field. I tried to keep from thinking

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of the coming ordeal, and in order to keep my spirits from flagging in the least, I, like many others, sought about among our camp-followers until we found and drank some of the strongest liquor to be had either by theft or purchase.

Early next morning, on the 16th, orders came that we should move on to Quatre Bras, a village about twenty miles south of Brussels. Here we had to take up our position in a wood called Bois de Bossu. I well remember my surprise on seeing so many armed men assembled, and when I first saw the enemy, as they were called, I looked at them without the least feeling of anger or animosity. There they were at a distance in vast masses, and long blue lines marching and forming in front of us. I was at the time rather pleased at the display, as I had often been at a review when a boy, and could have fraternized with them readily, and for some moments I wondered why we should be there to take their lives. Soon, however, this amicable feeling gave place to one of the very opposite kind. They commenced to fire on us, and I could see some of our Belgian allies drop from their ranks, and as the firing increased they fell very fast.

Soon afterwards, the thunder of artillery became almost deafening, and at intervals shouting and cheers could be heard, and orderlies could be seen galloping to and fro. I remember that my company and some others were commanded to kneel and fire away over a kind of hedge. I took no aim at first, but when the man right in front of me was in a moment shot down dead, then how my teeth became clenched, and the blood rushed suddenly to my brain! There the poor fellow lay at my very feet with a wild stare, the breath of life having left him forever. I hastily unstrapped his great coat and threw it over him,* and when I knelt again I took aim as well as I could through the smoke,

* A real incident.

and I had no more feeling for the enemy than a savage. After some hours of dreadful noise and excitement, of rushing forward and back, of advancing and retreating, of forming squares to receive cavalry, and then extending to charge infantry, the firing slackened and at last ceased, and when the dense clouds of smoke had cleared away, what a sight met our eyes! Men, horses, tumbrils, and cannons; swords, muskets, and pistols; hats, coats, and knapsacks, scattered all over the ground apparently for miles around. As we moved away, it was with difficulty that in some places we could avoid stepping upon the dead, or adding a fresh torture to some prostrate wounded soldier. Here and there as we set our feet down they would sink into pools of clotted gore, and in consequence of this several of the men had their trousers from the knee down stained and spattered with blood, while many had their faces and hands blackened with powder. This is what I witnessed after my first battle, and though it is said that soldiers become indifferent to such scenes of havoc, I must say that after the excitement which controlled me during the engagement had died away, my feelings were dreadfully shocked to hear the groans of wounded and dying men, and to see the sickening sights in the carnage and devastation about us.

The slaughter was over for the time. The French under Marshal Ney had retreated, and we were left masters of the position; but at what a cost! Though we had won the battle, we suffered more than the enemy. Our loss at Quatre Bras was over 5,000 men, while that of the French was but little more than 4,000. This arose from the fact that they had a splendid force of cavalry and artillery, we having, it might be said, none; for the Belgian horse that were placed under command of Wellington galloped away from us without scarcely striking a blow, leaving us to stand the brunt of the battle almost alone.

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When the depressing news came that the Prussians were defeated at Ligny, we had orders to keep up our line of communication with them, and following their retrograde movement we moved on towards Waterloo, some ten miles nearer to the Capital. The march that day through heavy rain was most dreary and fatiguing, and about three o'clock on the afternoon of the 17th of June, we were glad when we were brought to a halt on the field where Wellington had determined to contest the further progress of Napoleon towards Brussels. Situated as we were, and exposed to the inclemency of the weather, we had to make the best arrangements we could to get refreshment and rest. We had to lie on the wet ground that night, but as I felt dreadfully fatigued, it was not long until I, and I believe most of the thousands around, were in a sound sleep—alas! how many for the last time! as their next deep repose was to be one which would know no waking.

CHAPTER V.

WATERLOO.

I must have slept for some hours. Bruce had been lying by my side. Some time, however, during that sad night, I was awakened by a kind of sobbing sound, and I asked Bruce why he could not sleep. He was sitting up, and in the dim light I could see his head bent down and his hands spread over his face.

"I can't sleep, Harry," he answered, "I have been thinking of home, and I have a kind of dreadful impression that I am never to see them again."

The poor fellow could not restrain his tears, and I felt the greatest sympathy for him.

"Nonsense, Bruce!" said I, "these impressions are nothing. We have as good a chance as others. We shall not be killed, at worst we may get a wound or two. Try and rest, man, try and rest, there may be no battle to-morrow."

"'Tis to-morrow now," said he, pointing languidly at the faint dawn towards the east. "This is to be my last day, Harry, and when I rest again it will be forever!"

The solemn manner in which he spoke set me thinking. I fancied that I could see my mother looking at me with sorrowful face, and when I remembered my treatment of her, my eyes too filled with tears, and I would have given the world to undo what I had done, and clasp her once more to my heart.

Half an hour longer passed in silence. How solemn the black clouds looked overhead, and the wind came with a melancholy foreboding sound, as if to warn many a prostrate sleeper of his coming doom! The dreary day was making its appearance when Bruce spoke again.

"Harry," said he, pulling out a small silver watch—one of the kind called a "bull's eye"—"if I should not live long enough to see another dawn, I want you to give this to my mother, 'tis all I have left to offer her; and see, I've put a lock of my hair in here for her also," (he opened the watch-case to let me see where it was placed,) "and I want you to get any back pay that may be due me and send it to her, she will require it."

I assured him that I would do anything he wished, but I said that I thought these bequests would be unnecessary.

"Well, never mind," he replied, "a few hours more will tell the story. Besides, I wish you to deliver this to her," he whispered the name of the young woman to whom he was engaged, "and tell her she was in my last thoughts and that I prayed for her happiness." He

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took from his little finger a thin plain gold ring, wrapped it in a bit of paper and gave it to me.

I received these things mechanically from him, and then with an air of seeming indifference, I told him it was simply folly to allow his imagination to control him to such an extent. I had, I said, just as good reason as he to predict or anticipate evil, but that I had no such fears as disturbed him.

"Nor have you the same grounds," said he, slowly. "You will live through this, Harry, but I shall not. Tell them about me, for we shall be together to the end."

I made some further remarks deprecating his gloomy notions, thinking that after we had arisen and bestirred ourselves we should forget the whole matter.

Rain again! Rain coming down in torrents. Vivid lightning flashing around and loud thunder reverberating as if the whole artillery of heaven was determined to give man an evidence of his impotence, and to rebuke him for his pride, his presumption, and his wickedness. But great as was the elemental strife that ushered in the gloomy morning of the 18th of June, it passed harmlessly over our heads, while nearly 200,000 assembled warriors were waiting until God's grand storm should pass away, so that man's should begin, and with his lightning, and thunder, and iron hail, stop the pulsation of more than ten thousand human hearts, and crush, wound, and mutilate thrice ten thousand human beings, bringing lasting and innumerable woes on many others. There they stood waiting, the forces of France and the forces of Britain, for the storm to pass in order to receive the dread command to begin the work of destruction; and one might fancy that the clouded sky was darkened still more by the outspread wings of the Demon of Death hovering over the plain, as if waiting impatiently for the booming and the rattle which were to announce the beginning of the bloody carnival.

Hour after hour passed, and still it rained. From early dawn rumbling and tramping sounds were heard. Legions and cohorts, squadrons and battalions, field guns and ammunition wagons, with every known instrument of destruction, were brought together by Napoleon to crush the allied forces and to secure on the field of Waterloo his own supremacy in Europe. There were the hostile armies in grand array, but still the sky frowned and the clouds wept. It would seem as if Merciful Heaven had looked down with disapproval on these vile preparations for destruction, and had in pity hidden the sunbeams so that men's passions would have had time to cool, and that there might be a reconciliation.

But still, though the defiant armies waited, there was no opening in the clouds, and the muttered curses of those who were anxious to begin the fray, but prevented by the incessant rain, could be heard in English, French, and German. It was now nearly ten o'clock in the forenoon, and the weather continued so bad that impatient Generals on both sides began to fear that all idea of a battle on that day must be given up. After that hour, however, the clouds parted, and the sky became clearer. The hostile forces could be seen by each other, and their movements and counter movements detected. More than another hour passed before a shot was fired, and as most persons are acquainted with the fierce and terrible struggle which followed on that memorable day, I need not recount the numerous scenes of destruction that took place.

Some time in the afternoon our regiment was ordered to join another in a bayonet charge on the enemy. We could hear the shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and the rolling of drums. We gave a loud cheer of defiance, and, enveloped in smoke, rushed on the French. As we dashed excitedly along, I saw my poor comrade

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Bruce, then at my side, drop his musket, throw up his arms, and fall heavily backwards. To stop for a single moment was impossible. I was forced onwards and was obliged to leave him dying or dead where he was. In less than twenty minutes afterwards a ball passed through the fleshy part of my thigh, and by some other means I was struck down. I lay where I fell until after midnight, when I was fortunately discovered by a party of our men and borne away. I never saw Bruce again, but before I left the hospital I was told that his body had been recognized and buried with others of his regiment, and he still lies in his soldier's grave on the field of Waterloo.

Shall we ever meet again? My poor comrade was, as the phrase goes, hurried into the presence of his Maker with a deadly weapon in his hands directed against the bosom of some fellow-creature. He passed into eternity in the very act, it might be said, of taking human life. Could such an act meet with the approval of the Almighty? I doubt it. Can an action of the kind be overlooked or excused in a Christian? I am aware that Christian nations are foremost to tolerate war. To me this is perplexing and inexplicable. I who have witnessed something of the bloody struggles of a battle field, I who have seen men and animals writhing in torture with none to offer the slightest relief, pronounce war horrible and atrocious. No matter by whom or by what sanctioned or tolerated, actual war is to me infamous; it is a disgrace to civilization and degrading to humanity. For these strong expressions I may lay myself open to severe censure. I may be pointed to a chapter or verse, or to a "Thus saith the Lord!" I may be frowned upon by Christian sages, and reproved by reverend fathers of the church for my seeming heterodoxy. I cannot help this. From the depths of my soul I abominate war, and I fearlessly assert that in every

sense it is brutal, diabolic, and debasing to human nature.

We may be told that war is a dire necessity, that among the creatures of the animal kingdom there is a constant deadly strife, and that there was once war among the angels even within the sacred confines of Heaven; we may be told that in ancient times God's peculiar people were commanded to slay their enemies, and that this might have been permitted for some great mysterious purpose; but it should be different now, for according to a later revelation have we not the precepts of Him whom Christians call the Divine Master, and whose glowing words are said to be: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also? Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute you." If, therefore, we are submissive to these teachings and love our enemies, there can be no more war among Christian people; it must forever cease among these upon earth, as they tell us it has among the glorified saints in the kingdom of the blest. If I dared to curse now, I would curse those who still advocate war while keeping safe themselves from the bloody strife!

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CHAPTER VI.

IN HOSPITAL.

Nearly six months in a hospital! Six dreary months surrounded by the wounded and disabled, scarcely a day passing without seeing some stricken or mutilated wreck of humanity borne away to his grave. What a time for serious reflection! Never shall I forget the many heart-rending scenes which I witnessed during my confinement as an invalid. There we lay crowded together, every possible foot of room having to be occupied to give shelter to some poor creature who had perhaps but a few hours longer to live. Terrible enough as it was to see the prostrate and the fallen on the field of battle, yet it was something awful to see so many of the mortally wounded stretched helplessly around us, who, with pale pinched features were calmly, or restlessly, or insensibly awaiting death.

And then, during the long hours of the night, how painful and depressing to hear the groans, the ravings, the ejaculations, and the half-muttered prayers or curses of the tortured or sleepless; for many of the more desperately wounded could have had scarcely one moment's sound repose from the time they had been struck down. There they lay—Oh! what an end to military ambition!—some writhing, some weeping, some paralyzed, and some wishing for their final release.

One thing, however, which struck me as very remarkable, was the almost complete indifference of the dying regarding a future state of rewards or punishments after death. Very few seemed to give the momentous subject the slightest consideration. Every one

of the suffering mortals stretched about us had been, I might say, brought up in the belief of the Christian religion, yet there were no terrors arising from the thoughts of a dreadful hell, or ecstatic hopes to delight from anticipations of heaven. All who wished for death—and there were many of these—believed, apparently, that when they ceased to breathe there would be an end of their sufferings, and that they should be forever at rest.

There was, after all, one notable exception to this seeming unconcern. Within a few feet of me lay a sergeant of one of our regiments. He was a young man, scarcely beyond twenty-six. He had been desperately wounded in the breast by a shell, and it was a proof of his great strength and vigor that he continued to linger so many days after the surgeons had pronounced the wound mortal. I felt greatly for him and did what I could to assist in giving him all the possible ease that his case would admit of. He had not the slightest hope of his recovery, and though his mind was clear as to his condition, he was harassed by doubts, fears, and regrets to a very painful degree, and many times during the day, and often through the night, his sighs and self-reproaches were most distressing; and his dread of future retribution was frequently a cause of great mental torture.

"Fool, idiot, madman that I was to bring myself to such a state as this! Will God ever forgive me for what I have done? Alas! alas! I see the evil of my ways too late, too late! And Oh! what am I to expect in the eternity which is to follow?"

I tried, of course, to give him what comfort I could under the circumstances, but my efforts were often but of little avail. At times when I thought I should grow worse and die myself, then I too began to fear, and, instinctively as it were, I resorted to prayer, and putting aside all shame, I used to kneel close to the bed-side of

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my dying companion and pray that God would have pity and mercy on us both, as well as on the unconverted multitude around us, many of whom were about to appear in his awful presence, and many of whom I thought might, alas! only hear the dread words of their condemnation. Then though at times I used to feel hardened and indifferent, yet I would frequently become almost alarmed regarding the state of my soul, and my apprehensions would be increased by remorse—for that of the dying sergeant seemed to be contagious, and to add to my own forebodings. However, while often feeling spiritually dead or indifferent, I would persist, and, thinking that my greatest resource was in prayer, I made my voice heard by those around, and I imagined that many a moan was occasionally suppressed in order that my words of invocation might reach an ear that must soon be past further hearing. Still, harassed by doubts, my religious progress was often greatly obstructed.

One night while reading by the dim light a little Testament which had been kindly given me by some pious visitor, I was sorely tempted by what I read to disbelieve in the Divine Revelation of Christianity, and to think that, from the admitted difficulties in its explanation, the comparatively few of the most intelligent who accepted its entire teachings, and from the few even among believers that, after all, should be finally saved, the whole was but a cunningly devised fable. In some places I was struck by contradictions which troubled me much, and I must in candor admit that the question of authenticity became more perplexing when the sergeant unexpectedly demanded from me, why God permitted evil to exist; why God, who was said to be all-powerful, should allow an arch-enemy to thwart his plans and influence fallible beings to their destruction, leaving but a small number to escape?

I of course gave him the best reply I could. I told

him that many of God's truest servants had been sorely tried by vain questionings and foolish misgivings, as if these had been sent to test their faith. I told him it was proper when such evil interrogations were suggested by the same arch-enemy, or by our own erring reason, to deal with them as a celebrated divine used to deal with his doubts, that is, to put them down by main force and then resort to prayer.

He seemed dissatisfied, however, with the explanation I had given, but when I suggested that we should ask for divine enlightenment he appeared willing, and then, after I had, with rather timid faith, entreated the Lord to make plain to our minds that which was to be understood in his Holy Word, I think we both felt more contented to wait that fuller explanation which we thought He alone could give, and which I was then almost confident would sooner or later be imparted by the Holy Spirit to every searcher after divine truth.

A few moments after this, when the melancholy wind was moaning outside, and the rain falling fast, he said to me:—"I have not yet told you anything of my history; it will be useless to tell you much, but I shall feel some relief if I inform you of the particular circumstance which caused me to leave a comfortable home, to betray my dearest friend, and to enlist, and which has brought me to my present hopeless condition, my misery, and to my deserved retribution." He then gave me a short account of his family, and of the principal matter which brought him so much self-reproach and depression now that he was, he believed, soon to be called upon to make an acknowledgment in the presence of the great omnipotent Judge of all.

His father was a respectable shop-keeper in London, who, desirous of advancing his only son, gave him a good education, and got him a position in the office of a leading attorney. While attending his studies, much of

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the time from home, he got acquainted with a few young men, students like himself, but of dissipated and ex- travagant habits, causing him not only to contract a number of debts which he was quite unable to pay, but to embarrass his father to a very serious degree. One of his companions, more reckless than the others, with the view of obtaining money to meet certain pressing demands, as well as to have an amount at disposal for further debauchery, got him to join in a promissory note for two hundred pounds. To this the endorsement of a prominent legal firm was forged by his unprincipled friend, who was soon after arrested, tried, and trans- ported for the illegal act, leaving him to escape with great difficulty the charge of being an accomplice. But this was not his worst trouble. He had become very much attached to the sister of one of the young men with whom he had been so intimate. She reciprocated the gentle feeling, and unwisely placing too much con- fidence in his honor, was in that condition which, ac- cording to the stern social code of morality of the day— one which is still truly inhuman—must have brought her disgrace unless he soon became her husband. This he promised to do. Everything was prepared for the marriage, but, on the very morning on which the cere- mony was to have taken place, he violated his pledge. He indulged in strong drink until he had become intox- icated, and while in this condition, he deliberately went to a recruiting office and enlisted, dishonorably leaving her who had loved and trusted him to the contempt, and the reproaches of a censorious and unfeeling world. Now bitterly dwelling on what must have been her fate, his self-condemnation was almost constant, and here on his dying bed he was bewailing with tears his terrible treachery. When I spoke of repentance to God, he turned on me with a look of reproach and said:—

"Repentance to God! What reparation can that be

to her who may now be homeless, wandering, and despised?" He would then exclaim: "Oh! God, pity her. Oh! pity her and help her, even if I should see but thy frown and sink to eternal perdition. Repentance! Can I at the eleventh hour be absolved from all sin, be made pure and forgiven, while she through my evil and treacherous act is to be condemned? This is not justice! Oh! God! let it not be so! I am the sinner, the deceiver, the serpent, and let thy vengeance be on me alone!"

I found it useless to say much to him until his mind had become more calm, but as he was failing fast I thought it best to be as watchful of him as possible until the last moment. Towards the next midnight he aroused me from a kind of doze, for he had now become so weak and wasted, and I pitied him so much, that I dared not venture to indulge in anything like a sound sleep, lest he should pass away without one near to hear his last word, or see him draw his last breath. In a voice scarcely above a whisper, he asked, "Can God have mercy on me after what I have done? Will He not cast me off forever?" I replied in the words of the 103d Psalm—"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." And I quoted further from another—"His anger endureth but a moment; His mercy endureth forever."

But even the solacing words which should be so assuring seemed to have but little effect. He was as one almost overwhelmed with doubts and apprehension, and in agony of mind replied:—

"Is not God also a 'consuming fire'? Does he not say in Jeremiah—'I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy'; 'For I have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn forever?'" "Oh!" continued he, "are not these dreadful words, all intended for me, and now a thousand times more dreadful to me than they ever were before?"

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It was plain to be seen that the poor man's mind was terribly tortured. A person would think that he must have been at one time given to what has been called the rather sinful task of selecting and comparing so-called contradictory texts; for the moment I quoted some gracious promise, he would at once repeat some passage which must have conveyed the idea to his mind that the merciful Creator was as unforgiving, as relentless, and as revengeful as erring, implacable man.

He was now fast sinking. Like one in the midst of threatening waves, he seemed to despair of rescue, and he looked imploringly at me as the dew of death could be seen on his brow, and the shadow of the awful messenger drawing closer towards him. His lips moved as if he wished to speak. I held my ear close to them and heard him whisper but one lone word—"Pray!" I did pray then from the depths of my soul, and beseeched the Lord of all mercy and compassion to look on him with an eye of forgiveness, and not to cut him off forever. While I was thus engaged, he made a feeble effort to draw me closer to him, and then, as it were, summoning all his remaining strength, he said:—

"One thing do for me if you ever return to England. See *her* and tell her how I have repented of my betrayal; how she was in my last thoughts, and how I have implored the great God of Heaven to protect her."

He then gave me her name and the address of the place where he had last met her, and I had scarcely given him the assurances which he required when he became insensible. I could just hear him mutter a prayer and her name, and in a few minutes afterwards, before the dawn made its appearance, his soul took its flight and left its shattered tenement. In less than an hour from that time, the body was removed, and when the sun rose that wintry morning his pale weak beams fell upon the grave of the young sergeant.

CHAPTER VII.

EARTH TO EARTH.

I was in England again. With what different feelings I had landed, when compared with those which had influenced me when I left! I was now a discharged soldier in civilian's clothing, and but slowly regaining my strength. My first impulse was to find my mother and implore her pardon. I was most anxious to see her again, for I had heard nothing of her since the time of my reckless departure. I called at the well-known dwelling in London, but I found it occupied by strangers, who could give me no information concerning her. There had also been removals from the adjoining houses, and as people in a large city, living even in the same street, for the most part know but little of one another, I could find no person in the neighborhood to tell me where she had gone. What perpetual changes seem to be in the order of human affairs! After many useless inquiries it struck me that I should call on the nearest circuit preacher for tidings. I did so and learned that in consequence of the failing state of my mother's health, Mr. Shaw had been removed to St. Leonard's in Sussex, by the sea, in the hope that the change would help her. The death of the superintendent of that circuit about three months previous to that time had left a vacancy, of which Mr. Shaw had therefore availed himself, and I was told that it was in that place I should now find her.

I left London early next morning. Travelling in those days was very different from what it is at present, and I did not reach my point of destination until the

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third evening from the time of my departure from the city. I had to walk about a mile from where the stage stopped. It was the end of March, the weather was cold and misty, and as I went leisurely and thoughtfully along I passed close to a country churchyard. At a little distance I saw a number of persons within the ancient enclosure, evidently attending a funeral. The branches of a great willow hung in a melancholy manner around them. I stood looking on. It was a scene that in a degree was then in unison with my own thoughts. In a few moments I heard a voice giving out a funeral hymn, a hymn that I had often heard before, and I remained almost spell-bound by solemn reflections while a verse was being sung, and as the cold evening wind wafted the mournful melody nearer and made it more distinct, I felt much affected, and in spite of every restraint big tears filled my eyes when I thought of the many prevailing sorrows, afflictions, and uncertainties of life. At the close of the first verse, another was read out, and I could now hear every word with greater distinctness:—

"This languishing head is at rest,
Its thinking and aching are o'er;
This quiet, immovable breast,
Is heaved by affliction no more.
This heart is no longer the seat
Of trouble and torturing pain,
It ceases to flutter and beat,
It never shall flutter again."

In deep sympathy with the bereaved mourners who had lost some dear friend,—brother, or sister, or wife, or husband, or parent,—I could not leave the place. There, thought I, is another admonitory lesson of the vanity of all earthly things. There beneath the little mounds around lie many to whom this transitory life might have been the all-attractive especial glory, who were perhaps governed by inordinate desires for wealth, honor, and distinction. How evanescent is the glory of

the world! Alas! how mute are they now who would fain be heard by applauding thousands! Silent forever! until the last trump, as it is believed, shall call them forth to judgment.

The hymn was ended, and, after a short pause, another voice was now heard, a voice at first tremulous with emotion, but yet one evidently expressive of confidence in the sacred words—sacred to those at the grave—which were uttered, and of the hope in the future union of sundered hearts. “I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

I was startled! I knew the voice again—it was *his*, surely. It was Mr. Shaw, who was now repeating the solemn form of service. I listened with more eager attention. He seemed to feel deeply for the bereavement which some member of his society had met; and his closing prayer was so fervent and touching that the sobbing of nearly all present could be distinctly heard. My emotions at the time would be indescribable. Though standing apart from the others, through a most unaccountable feeling I imagined myself the chief mourner, and, when they commenced to throw in the earth, I felt as if some beloved form was about to be hidden from me forever; and the hollow sounds from the depth of the grave seemed like the knell of departed hope, and that I was now to be alone in a bleak world.

After this, one by one left the place. The grave must have been nearly filled, but Mr. Shaw and a few others remained until the fresh mound was formed and covered with green sods, and then I noticed that it was with apparent reluctance that he and the friends of the deceased took their sad steps from the churchyard, leaving me and the approaching night alone among the tombs.

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I waited there until all were out of sight. I was in no haste to follow. I felt strangely sick at heart, and was someway unwilling that the last poor tenant which had but just entered the house of the dead should yet be left entirely alone. I was attracted towards the newly-made grave. I got over the low stone wall. I went to the spot and stood there pondering. How soon, thought I, may it be my turn to be a mourner like those who have just left here, and to drop a tear over one whose loss will be irreparable? In a minute or two I was aroused by the sound of footsteps. A little boy had come there for a spade which had been left behind. I asked him:—

"My good lad, can you tell me whose grave this is? Who is it that was buried here this evening?"

Oh! the terrible reply that laid me prostrate! Oh! the agony of the dreadful moment! For I, the wretched heart-stricken wanderer, had but returned to see my mother's funeral, and beneath the shadows of that sad night to moisten her lonely grave with my repentant tears!

CHAPTER VIII.

ON A WILD CIRCUIT.

Desirous of fulfilling the anxious wish of my departed mother, and more in accordance with her desire than my own inclination, I made application as soon as possible after her death, and was sent out as a preacher to spend my first year on a remote circuit. This suited me better than to be in the vicinity of a large town, for I was among a simple, rural people, well disposed and religiously inclined, who overlooked the perfunctory

way in which I performed many of my duties, and I had much time for reading and study. I must say that I left them with regret. I chanced to see but few of them again; and since that far-back period of my life, many of them have, I trust, passed to their great reward, if such is in store for the truly worthy.

My duties the second year were very different, being in reality both difficult and dangerous. They were spent more in an endeavor to civilize a certain barbarous class of English people than in fact to teach them religion. As to that, they had scarcely the remotest idea of what religion really meant; and notwithstanding that more than a century has passed since Wesleyans in particular made such people the objects of special attention, I think I shall not be accused of going beyond the truth when I assert that very many of their descendants at the present day in the mines, and scattered in various places throughout the kingdom, are as vile, as stupid, as brutal, and almost as dangerous as their ignorant ancestors were even in the time of Cromwell. Oh! that Home Missions were made first in importance!

I have heard some enthusiasts say that if you desire to civilize the heathen you must first bring them under religious subjection. This may be the case with the most abject and superstitious of the foreign heathen, but most of those I found at home—and they are still, alas! too numerous—were not only indifferent to the gospel, but vicious and degraded to such a degree that I often thought nothing less than a miracle from heaven would ever bring them under the influence of anything pious or elevating. The people of the Northern county among whom I was to spend much of my time during my second year, were perhaps the very worst class of miners. The previous year a young man had been sent to them by the Conference, but he went among them only a short time, being glad, as I was afterwards in-

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formed, to escape with his life. As it was known, however, that I had had some rough experiences as a soldier, it was thought that I should be able to contend with difficulties in trying to deal with such a people better than any one else they had to send, and I subsequently found out that it required all the strength of mind and body which I possessed to let them know that I was not to be intimidated and driven away as others had been.

I shall never forget the first Sabbath I spent among these barbarians, for I could call them nothing else at the time, and my astonishment that so vile a class should exist in Christian England, could not be exceeded when I thought of the vast sums which had been paid out of the exchequer of the nation for the support of the Established Church, the large amounts which were regularly subscribed for the support of dissenting ministers and preachers, and the thousands which were annually collected in Britain for the spread of the gospel in distant lands. I had seen much of the poverty and degradation which exists in London, and those are still dreadful; I had seen impiety and wickedness in the army; but, in proportion to their numbers, these in the shire in which I was now called to labor were the most depraved, if not the most infamous, lot of men and women I ever set foot among.

I was at first unable, or at least unwilling, to recognize such a fact, but I was soon forced to acknowledge that the veriest pagans, from what I had learned of their condition socially and otherwise, could not be more thoroughly abject than the squalid, impoverished, and rather dangerous set working, and, I might almost say, living in the lead mines, and the coal mines, of a certain Northern county in England, and who were included among the population as the loyal and contented subjects of his Christian Majesty—King George the Third.

It was growing dusk on a Saturday evening towards the end of August, when I found myself on a lonely road which led to the mining district, and about ten miles from the little market town in which was the principal chapel of this remote circuit. I had been purposely misdirected by more than one of whom I made inquiries as to the right way, and had to travel round about some miles, thereby causing me to lose much valuable time. Anyway I was now on the proper road, for I knew by the wild moor, as well as by the barren and desolate-looking hills in the distance, that I would soon be at my destination, and I had hopes that even among the rough miners, though much had been said against them, I should find some that would give me a welcome and make me as comfortable as their circumstances permitted. I had of course been informed that I should have to deal with a very rude set, yet I thought that some consideration for a friendly stranger might prompt them to try and control their dislike to a new-comer, especially to a preacher, until they had found some fair excuse for exhibiting a contrary feeling. I was aware that they were very much prejudiced against us, and there was no doubt whatever but that an insidious enemy had poisoned their minds against every dissenting teacher, more particularly against the followers of John Wesley.

While thinking of my altered situation, of my strange calling, and of the many strange and sad changes which had taken place within the last few years of my life, I was suddenly startled from my reverie by the sound of a rough loud voice within a few feet of me:—

"Halloo! stop! What brings 'ee here?"

I looked hurriedly around, and in the dim light I could see close by a stout barefooted man scowling at me from the roadside. He was squatted on a large boulder, and was almost near enough to touch my

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horse's head. He wore no hat, he held a short black pipe between his teeth, and his unkempt hair and heavy-bearded face gave him a wild, ogreish aspect which was most forbidding. Rather surprised by such an apparition, I gazed at him for a few moments without speaking, when springing up from where he sat, he drew from under his ragged frock a short heavy bludgeon, and assumed a threatening attitude. He again hastily demanded:—

"What brings 'ee here? We'n lets no highwaymen along these parts."

Though, as I have said, I was at first somewhat startled, I was now sufficiently calm, and replied in an easy, off-hand way,—the best way I thought under the circumstances:—

"Why, what's the matter, friend? This is the King's high road. Don't you see my horse has brought me? I'm no highwayman; if I am, what am I to call you for waylaying me this way? Come, come, friend, let me pass. I don't intend to go but little further; 'tis getting dark. I shall remain close by here all night, and maybe I shall have some good news to tell you to-morrow."

The familiar way in which I replied appeared only to irritate him, and, seizing my horse by the bridle, he exclaimed, loud enough to be heard at some distance around: "D——n you and your hoss! We knows too much uv such chaps as you. By ——! 'eel go no further oot o' this, not a yard, unless we send 'ee to hell; and if 'ee have any good news 'ee may tell it theer."

I tried to appear as little disconcerted as possible while I took a good survey of the man I had to deal with, and could I be assured at the moment that he was the only rough fellow I should meet, his bluster or threats would have had but little effect. However, though not in the least intimidated, I thought it best to

proceed cautiously and be careful of what I said to a reckless, semi-civilized man, who might not hesitate to do me or my horse some injury.

"There, that's a good fellow, now please let go and allow me to pass on."

Instead of loosing his hold of the bridle, he clutched it tighter, and with a quick tug, as if to snap the bit, or the leather, he caused the horse to rear. But I kept my seat, and then applying the spurs, the horse shied, and the desperado was pulled to the ground on his face. Quickly springing up, he aimed a blow at me which I happily avoided, and then his oaths and threats were terrible. He still held on to the reins, and I spoke to him again and made another unsuccessful attempt to get away, but as I found that something more than mere self-defence was necessary, I hesitated no longer, but partly following the example of another preacher I had read of, I clutched my whip firmly and struck him with the thick end across the head.

Seeing that the smart blow rather staggered him, I applied the spurs again and was on the point of getting away, when another ruffian as desperate-looking as the first confronted me. He had heard the loud imprecations and ran towards us. I now saw him stoop, and with a deep curse he hurled a large stone at me. By leaning aside a little, I fortunately escaped what might have caused me a very serious, if not a fatal wound; but my horse suffered. One of his ears was split open nearly its entire length. The blood quickly streamed along his neck and down his head, and, being greatly frightened, he reared and plunged to such a degree that I was hurriedly obliged to dismount. It was fortunate I did so. He cantered off at once, and I was left to struggle as best I could with two brutal men, who, I felt satisfied, would not hesitate in their present excited and angry condition to take my life.

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As it was, a more unexpected or unprovoked attack I had never witnessed. I was about twenty yards away from my assailants, my horse in his wild efforts having carried me that distance. I might have run and followed the horse, but I knew not which way he went, so I thought it best to stand my ground. My training and discipline in the army I now found to be of great service. I felt perfectly cool, and as the wretch whom I had struck rushed at me with the fury of a demon, followed by his confederate, I awaited their approach. The only weapon I had to use was my heavy riding-whip, and as the first man came within striking distance, I promptly stepped aside and let him run by, and before he could turn and raise his club, I struck him another blow on the back of his head, and he fell again.

Scarcely longer than a second I found myself in the grasp of the other man. His thick arms were around me, binding mine down on either side, leaving me unable to use them. His hot, foul breath, was on my face, and, like a savage, he made attempts to bite me, his teeth having just scraped my chin. There was not a moment to lose. I must disengage myself quickly, or be held as it were in a vise likely until the ruffian I had struck down returned to take revenge. I tried to trip my antagonist, but he was too wary of my attempts, and I had much to do to keep him from throwing me and probably holding me down, when I could be maltreated or murdered at leisure. He was leaning heavily against me, no doubt with the purpose of bearing me over, but at once with a powerful bump of my knee I hit him in the stomach. He was immediately disabled, his hold relaxed, and not giving him time to recover, I struck him a well-directed blow in the face.

I was just about to run and make my escape by some means the best way I could, when I heard fresh shouting quite near, and approaching me came half a dozen

men and women, the latter like the veriest furies. What was I to do? A shower of stones fell about me, one of which struck me heavily in the breast. I most certainly thought that my time had come, and I hastily commended my soul to God. Another stone then struck me on the knee, leaving me for the moment unable to stir from the spot. Now, thought I, they will make an end of me. Here, in one of the wildest, dreariest, and most uncivilized parts of England, was I almost in the darkness of night alone, with none to help or save, in the hands of a brutal, treacherous set—it might be far more vicious and cruel than an equal number of un-Christianized foreign savages—who were apparently without a single feeling of pity or mercy for man or beast.

"Daum un, what's 'ee been adoin' to oor mates?" yelled a powerful looking fellow, giving me a blow on the shoulder, while his companions, men and women, assisted him in pulling me down and holding me stretched on the ground. "Daum un, what's 'ee bin an' dun?" cried the man again, and he was about to strike me in the face when one or two of the women held his arm. "Nay, Tom, let un be. What's the use, Tom, what's the good o' his cursed carcase? Let un have it; we'll take summat better an' not be afeard o' bums or ballees or their cursed law in mornin'. Don't ye kill 'im, Tom, don't I tell 'ee?" exclaimed the woman, as the fellow raised his hand again. "See, here's the swag ye want," and she quickly pulled out my watch and held it up to be seen. This seemed to have an effect on the man, for he tried to snatch it from her, but she managed to elude his grasp. Another man, after cursing and threats, then twisted my neckerchief, with the evident intention of choking me, but luckily it gave way, and feeling that it was silk, something no doubt rarely seen here and almost unknown to

the veriest furies. tones fell about me, the breast. I most come, and I hastily her stone then struck me moment unable to I, they will make an wildest, dreariest, and was I almost in the e to help or save, in set—it might be far equal number of un- who were apparently y or mercy for man or doin' to oor mates?" , giving me a blow on ons, men and women, own and holding me um un, what's 'ee bin t, and he was about to or two of the women an be. What's the use, ursed carcase? Let un er an' not be afeard o' law in mornin'. Don't l 'ee?" exclaimed the ais hand again. "See, t she quickly pulled out e seen. This seemed to e tried to snatch it from uide his grasp. Another then twisted my necker- tion of choking me, but g that it was silk, some- e and almost unknown to

the greater number of these people, his wrath seemed to have been almost suddenly appeased, for he started off with it, and a shilling or two he took from my pocket, followed at once by a woman who begged for a share of the booty.

It was quite useless for me to make the least attempt at resistance. Had I done so, a number of dangerous blows would most likely have followed. I lay as still as I could and let them plunder. While in this condition I heard the two men whom I had at first encountered now loudly demanding to finish me, as they said, and tear me limb from limb. Of course I gave myself up for lost, and found my ideas already becoming confused. As I lay I was powerless, and only expected that after having torn off my clothes and taken anything of little or much value they could find, I should be unmercifully despatched by the two brutes from whom I had previously succeeded in escaping. They would soon have me in their power, and that would be the end of my earthly probation.

Just then another voice reached my ear, an excited voice, one strangely different from the others; one whose hurried tones caused those about me to pause and listen, and then there came from the wild set a muttering sound and rude expressions of dissatisfaction at being disturbed.

"Oh! ye unfortunate people!" said the voice, "what are ye doing? For God's sake, let there not be another murder! Oh! Kelso, Ned Kelso! what a time for you to be out, and what work for you to be at, while your old mother is lying on her death-bed!" The man who first assaulted me now ran off when he heard the words, but the voice continued: "I know ye all, and will give every name to the bailiffs to-morrow if ye attempt to take life! Come, Simon, help! help! help!"

A redeeming angel in the form of a panting woman

rushed among those around me. It was too dark to see her features plainly, but her voice then sounded like the sweetest music I had ever heard. Simon, the person who accompanied her, was a large stout man, fully able if required to defend her from any insult, but, strange to say, there seemed to be but little need of his services. One by one the infamous gang stole away, and I was left wounded and bleeding with my deliverers.

CHAPTER IX.

AMONG ENGLISH SAVAGES.

I was soon on my feet again. My rescuers expressed great sympathy for me. The female, indeed I might say the lady, for her voice and manner indicated her to be such, was very particular in her inquiries as to whether I felt myself much injured, and she appeared to be exceedingly gratified when I assured her that I had only a few slight cuts and some scratches, and that it was only those which caused so much blood to cover my face, hands, and clothes. The man who accompanied her was apparently a rough, honest miner, one who, I subsequently learned, had with his family been turned from the evil of his ways mainly by the efforts and example of this good woman; and he was equally pleased that I had escaped so well.

It appeared that when my horse ran away he went on instinctively, as it were, towards the first house he saw, and this was the humble abode of Simon Blair. There they secured the animal in a little shed, and when they saw him cut and bleeding, they knew by the saddle-bags that it was the horse of the new preacher then ex-

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pected. Mrs. Edgar, the nearest neighbor, was quickly informed of what was suspected. It was at her house that any preacher who came, generally remained over night or during any short periodical stay he might make when visiting that part of the circuit; and fearing that an assault had been made on the stranger, she had rushed off at once with Simon, and guided by the distant voices and shouts of my assailants, had arrived perhaps just in time to save me.

How thankful I felt after I had washed and had bits of plaster applied to my cuts, and how comparatively comfortable when seated among a few kind friends at the supper table! I enjoyed the meal after my fears and struggles, and before retiring, I, with grateful impulse, made a fervent prayer for God's further protection, for his kindest blessings on those who had so nobly aided me, and for his mercy and converting grace on the unregenerate people who had so wantonly ill-used me; and grateful for my unexpected rescue—verily, I believed a Providential deliverance, I slept soundly that night, and rose early next morning refreshed and vigorous.

Mrs. Edgar, my kind hostess, was yet quite a young woman, and rather good looking. Indeed were it not for her sad, submissive expression of face, premature wrinkles, and occasional harassed look, she might be called handsome. She was not a tall person, yet graceful in form and outline; and her manner and appearance were much in her favor. But, poor woman, she seemed to have had her own cares, and, no doubt, had troubles of the most weighty kind. They came early in life, for she already wore a widow's cap and a dark dress, and with the exception of a prattling child, a little daughter just trying to walk, she appeared to have none of her own kind near her; for the wild miners of the district, although possessed of human forms, might for

many reasons be looked upon as belonging to a far different race altogether. Besides, it struck me that if she had any means at her disposal they must be very limited, else she certainly would not try to eke out a living in such a place and among such a people. Any way I thought that in the hard struggle for life here she would have grey hairs long before her usual time.

The house, the best to be seen for miles, was an old, low, brick structure partly renovated, and it looked as if but recently made again habitable. There were four rooms on the first floor, one of these was used as a kitchen, and the upper part of the dwelling was partitioned into two rooms with inclined ceilings corresponding to the pitch of the roof. All of these were but scantily furnished. I occupied one of the upper apartments. It was lighted by a little dormer window with patched panes, from which there was a most desolate view, and from it could be seen, far across the moor in the distance, a number of huts, evidently the squalid abodes of the miners. Mrs. Edgar and her child, with an old man and his wife, were the usual occupants of this unattractive tenement.

My first care when I got outside again in the morning was to look more carefully after my horse. With the exception of his badly-cut ear he seemed to be all right. We clipped the hair from about the wound and bound plaster on it the best way we could, and as he had a good shelter and plenty of hay, he would be, to all appearance, fit to travel again as soon as required. My saddle did not, however, get off so well. It had been left in a little porch outside the shed door, and sometime during the night it had been cut in several places, one of the skirts having been nearly torn off; and the bridle as well as the girths could not be found. Simon, no doubt accustomed to acts of this kind, said but little. He might have made a good guess as to who

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the perpetrators were, but he kept his mind to himself and merely said he would try and have the saddle "fixed oop a bit, an to'ther thins wi' th' wootch may coom wi seekin fur!" Well, thought I, taking the matter as I could, I shall only have to submit for a time. Simon may find the girths and bridle, they are not of much value, but as for my watch, I give that up as lost, they will never return *that*.

"Meastur, iv I wur 'ee," said Simon in his North country dialect, "I wud nur go fur from t' hoos; they be dreedful bad aboot heer—they bin." "Oh! I won't go far," said I in reply, "I shall try and keep clear of such rough customers as I came across last evening."

It being yet early, perhaps an hour or so before breakfast, I felt a curiosity to look around, and I turned my steps towards the low huts inhabited by the miners, and no doubt by such outlaws as could live among them in comparative safety to follow almost with impunity their vicious and felonious propensities. For if even some terrible outrage were committed—a matter of frequent occurrence—no single officer of justice would like to venture among them, and, if an arrest were even made, a conviction was next to impossible, as it would be certain that, if necessary, almost one and all would swear a thousand oaths to clear a culprit; for, unscrupulous as they might be in this respect, no magistrate would feel at liberty to refuse the testimony of even nominal Christians. However, should any confederate, or any stranger or intruder, give such evidence as would cause the law to be triumphant, the sooner he made his escape from the district the better for himself, as nearly the whole vindictive and dangerous community would seek revenge, and be on the watch for the first opportunity to injure the person or property of him who ventured or dared to interfere in behalf of justice.

As I looked about me a more desolate place it would

be hard to discover. Though the sun was trying to shine, or to penetrate the fog and miasmatic vapors which seemed to be here as it were in ambush, the aspect of the scene around was most depressing. Towards the north there was a dim line of sullen hills, but in the long dreary waste between them and where I stood, bare rocks, raised a foot or two above the surface, could here and there be seen gazing, one might imagine, with blank, worn, and impassible faces at the dull sky; rough hoary boulders were spread around as if they were the scattered fragments of some exploded world; while the few stunted, withered-looking shrubs that tried to force from the impoverished soil the scantiest nutriment, looked like a progeny of deformed starvelings clinging for sustenance to the empty breasts of a dead mother. Not a tree, not a stream, not the simplest wild-flower, scarcely even a blade of grass could be seen to enliven the eye, — while around some stagnant pool, weeds, brambles, and nettles appeared to grow in profusion, leaving the whole sterile bound place to look like the haunt of poverty and wretchedness.

Early however as it was this placid Sunday morning, there were already sad evidences that but few indeed regarded it as a day of rest in the proper sense, but only as one which would afford a greater opportunity for indulging in the vicious and debasing propensities of neglected and brutalized human beings. It was evidently the day beyond all others in which a degraded class of native British felt that a time of license to pamper and indulge the grossest animal passions and desires had someway again returned; and having scarcely the least idea that the Sabbath was set apart for religious service, or that there was anything spiritual or secular connected with its appointment, or that there was ever a law to condemn its desecration, free license was given

to every wicked impulse. The profanation of this particular day was a matter of regular recurrence, and the most shocking scenes of intemperance, brutality, beastliness, and sensuality, I had been told, could here be witnessed in their most disgusting forms, almost regularly every Sunday. On its return, few in this benighted place could say:—

"In holy duties let the day,
In holy comforts pass away;
How sweet a Sabbath thus to spend
In hopes of one that ne'er shall end!"

I believe in the day of rest. As an advocate of social improvement, I believe in its legal appointment, but I by no means believe that it would be more pleasing to the Almighty that it should be kept in as stern and as gloomy a manner as the Puritans were wont to observe it. Indeed, even they, and the strict Sabbatarians of that time, were to some extent less rigorous than some of our more modern teachers; for it is well known that the statute passed to gratify Puritan demands "for the better observance of the Sabbath," allowed the people, after their attendance at church, certain "lawful sports and pastimes," while at present many of the stricter sects insist that all Sunday recreation is an offence against the moral law, and a sin, and that the poor, overworked toilers in crowded, unhealthy places during six days of the week, who claim to be allowed a portion of the seventh day to visit parks, museums, and art galleries, should be met with a prompt denial; and also that the law should be so framed as to prohibit any such "sinful indulgence."

Against such restrictions I would offer my humble protest. Luther, Calvin, Baxter, Bunyan, and many other religious teachers since their time, favored reasonable bodily recreation on the Lord's Day, nor did they consider that by so doing the Sabbath would be in any danger of being desecrated or overlooked; and, as

a lover of that favorite day, I would submit that if we wish to make the Sabbath more welcome to all, let us, in connection with its pious associations, have it linked in the memory with sunlight and the blue sky, with green fields and trees, with flowers and running streams, and with every other natural object that can impress the mind with the beauties and glories of the creation. These are the mild preachers that are often the first to reach the heart. There is too much toiling among men; there is too much severe drudgery in the world. And I favor the idea that, apart from a day being dedicated solely to the Lord, it would be well for all should some other portion of time be secured to afford rest and recreation for overwrought human beings, as well as for the toiling animals under their control.

"Don't 'ee beaat me! don't 'ee beaat me, again, faythur!—Oh! don't 'ee!" cried a child-like voice from out of the middle of a thick lot of brambles.

During my reflections, I had unconsciously wandered to this spot, and here beneath my eyes was a pitiable sight. A little girl, bruised, cut, scratched, and bleeding, appeared to be hiding herself among the thorns and briars. She crouched at my approach, and again pleaded not to be beaten. She was not more than half-clothed. Her head and feet were bare, and she was trembling with fear lest there should be a repetition of the brutal treatment which she had evidently received.

"What's the matter, child, what's the matter? Look up, I won't hurt you." Hearing a strange voice, she ventured after a moment or two to turn her face towards me. Then, with a frightened expression, she looked cautiously from side to side, then around her, and then at me again.

"Who bin 'ee?" asked she in a low voice, as if afraid of being heard. "Who bin 'ee? Dinnot 'ee let un bang me again," said she, looking once more around.

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"Don't be afraid," I said, trying to re-assure her, "no one shall hurt you. But tell me what's the matter? Why are you here in such a place?"

I stooped and offered her my hand to assist her in getting free from the thorns. While she yet hesitated to avail herself of the opportunity for escape, I noticed that one of her middle fingers had been taken off at the second joint, and I had the curiosity at the moment to ask her how she had lost it.

"He bit un off, 'ee did," she replied, while she still continued crying.

"What? your father?"

"Oye, faythur!"

"Horrid brute!" I exclaimed, "why did he do such a thing?"

Heavy tramping was now heard close by, and a man made his appearance,—a dirty, staggering, brutal-looking fellow, who had been searching around to discover this child, in order, no doubt, to give her further abuse. The girl now managed to get quickly out of the brambles, and she stood behind holding me by the coat, and keeping me between her and the ruffian whom she called her father.

"What's the matter?" I demanded. "What do you want?" I asked, scowling upon him as he stood close to us, even within my reach.

"W'aats th' matter 'ee ask," replied the fellow," repeating my words. "W'aats that to 'ee? W'aat dost 'ee w'aant heer? Off wi' 'ee."

He tried to grab the girl, but she evaded him, while she cried again, "Oh! faythur! don't 'ee, don't 'ee!" and then I saw that he held in one of his hands my saddle girths doubled and twisted, the large buckles hanging down, having evidently been already used to cut and mark the tender back and shoulders of the poor trembling girl at my side.

"You shan't touch her again!" I almost shouted, with a feeling of indignation. "If you were a man, you would be ashamed of what you have already done."

He now appeared to become enraged at my interference, and, rushing past me, he made a kick at the girl, and though I warded off the blow to some extent, he struck her with his heavy iron-bound boot sufficiently hard on the shin to cause the blood to run afresh. As it was, I could not control my anger. I seized him by the throat and pulled the girths from his grasp, but I received two or three severe kicks in the struggle. I had something to do to hold him and keep him from following the girl, who was now limping away as fast as she could, when a slatternly woman made up to us. She struck the little girl as she passed her, and then fiercely attacked the man. I quickly let go of him and hurried towards the child, fearing they might follow her and give her perhaps worse treatment; but I had to return at once, for the brutal husband had knocked his wife down and was furiously kicking her with his hob-nail boots on the head, face, and body, in the most shocking manner, and when I laid hold of him again, the woman appeared to be senseless and unable to rise. She looked to be but a mass of blood and bruises, and from the savage blows she had received I thought she was dead.

Just then, much to my satisfaction, Simon made his appearance. The fellow who had abused the woman went deliberately away without seeming to care much whether he had taken her life or not, and it was left for me and Simon to try and restore her if possible.

"It divn't sa'and loikely she'll eever coom to," said he, as he looked upon the prostrate creature. "Oh! Meastur, bur they be a dreadful bad set heer—they bin."

It was even so, as further observation enabled me to discover; and during my subsequent intercourse with the ignorant savages of this region, I found Simon's significant caution almost always necessary. "Meastur, moind w'aat thee beest abaast, an' keep an eye on 'em; do!"

It was a necessary caution, for a more treacherous, unfeeling set at that time it would be impossible to come across in any part of the wide, wide world.

CHAPTER X.

A FIELD FOR MISSIONARIES.

The description of the natural man in the Bible was most applicable to the wicked and unregenerate of this place; for here could be found men and women "Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways!"

Indeed, the thorough ignorance, wickedness, and depravity existing among the squalid population of this district, made me feel ashamed that such a class could be found, as it were, in the heart of Britain, and I have often thought that were some of the intelligent Pagan, whom our missionaries appear so anxious to convert, were they but to visit this and similar sections of our Christian country, they would no doubt be much amazed to witness the degradation of so many of our people, far exceeding, perhaps, anything of the kind to be discovered in their own lands; and, in pity for the abject con-

dition of these British barbarians, compassionate Brahmins might well reproach, for their misdirected efforts, those numerous eleemosynary societies who incessantly importune rich and poor alike, in order to organize costly missionary excursions for the benefit of the heathen in distant lands, while, it would seem, almost totally neglecting a vast number of the far more ignorant, vicious, and irreclaimable, at home.

For many years I have held peculiar, but, I trust, common-sense views, regarding the propriety of foreign missions while we have so many without the least knowledge of the Gospel or of civilization among ourselves. None can be more anxious for the dissemination of truth than I am. But I contend that the physician should not leave the sick and languishing at his own door to visit those at a distance who do not ask for his services, or believe in the efficacy of his prescriptions, or in his mode of treatment. And though I have often been censured by prominent preachers and brethren for my great divergence of opinion on so important a matter, yet when I think of the hundreds in the mining districts who scarcely know anything of a Supreme Being or of social order, and of the thousands of unreclaimed even in the metropolis of England, and when I come to reflect that, after all which is said to have been done, there are many other thousands all through Britain who virtually would revel in crime were it not for the strong arm of the law—not because of any restraining religious influence—and further, when I firmly believe that it would not only require the active services of every social reformer in these islands, but of every missionary who has ever left our shores, to counteract the wicked and reckless tendencies of the ignorant and criminal populations of this and of other Christian lands; when I am therefore impressed with facts so solemn and convincing; and, further, when we

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hear the appeals and witness the sufferings of the tens of thousands of the poverty-stricken around us, I must still adhere to my views regarding foreign missions. For never yet have I heard any argument sufficiently persuasive which could induce me to overlook the superior claims of the pagan or the pauper British, in order to try and convert formally a few Feejees, Brahmins, or Confucians; to Christianity.*

"She lives," said I, seeing that the woman, after a few minutes, moaned and turned on her side. Simon had brought some water and sprinkled it over her face. A little of it was also poured into her mouth, and shortly after she had swallowed it, she sat up, to our surprise, without assistance. She stared wildly at us for a moment, but as soon as she recognized Simon, she appeared anxious to get away, and actually got up as if but little injured. I now noticed that the woman's face was marked with old scars, and a finger of each hand was missing. It was evident that this was not the first time she had been brutally beaten, and as she appeared to feel no very serious inconvenience from the ill-usage she had just received, she staggered off, but it was painful to discover that the cause of her unsteady steps was as much owing to draughts of intoxicating liquor as it was to kicks and blows which she had received from her drunken husband.

On my return after this early and rather revolting adventure, a few of us joined in a religious service in Mrs. Edgar's best room. Though not large, it might have easily held more than double the number that attended, yet humble as a tabernacle, it was, as was said, the very gate of Heaven to more than one present.

* During a trial at the Liverpool Assizes a short time ago, the Judge, Mr. Justice Mellor, when commenting on the depraved condition of a certain class of the English people, said: "If there are missionaries wanted to the heathen, there are heathens in England who require teaching a great deal more than those abroad."

Our Christian intercourse on that special occasion was most delightful, and some said that the Lord himself was very present to bless us! We prayed in turn for one another; we prayed for the heathen in distant lands, but more particularly did we beseech for the blind, the wicked, and the unregenerate around us, and for those who could even then be seen mocking us outside. We asked God to spare them for the sake of his Son, and the few who were then bowed before Him; that as he had promised to spare Sodom from the fury of his wrath should even ten righteous be found within its walls, we pleaded with Him to spare the ungodly in this benighted district for the sake of the six or seven who were then present as professed believers in His Divine Word.

Early, however, as I had been out that morning, I was not the first who had left the house. In the grey dawn a delicate woman could be seen making her way alone to one of the most distant huts. In her hand she held a little basket. On she went in thoughtful mood through the thick chilling mist that was around her. All is unusually silent as she goes along, for the riotous night-revels are over, and most of the dwellers in wickedness are now favored with Heaven's great restorative, sleep; yet how many will soon arise unthankful for this inestimable blessing! A few night-prowlers are still around, but they hide as she approaches and let her pass unmolested. She must be well known to all, for not even a dog will growl as she draws near, while a few of these run towards her exhibiting the most joyful emotions. She now pauses at a door-step, she sighs at the evidences of discomfort which she sees about her; her hand is on the latch—but she listens. A feeble light is inside, and while the dull sounds of deep breathing from heavy sleepers reach her ear, she hears the short quick panting and occasional low moan of one

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who is soon to close her eyes in a last sleep, never again to look on the things of earth. The creaking door is now slowly closed; not one is disturbed, but the poor palsied creature who is there prostrate turns her eyes wistfully towards the visitor and a faint smile comes for a moment on the pallid face. A number of persons are stretched around, and the air which they inhale is most foul and contaminating. On a rough bench near the bed lies a stalwart man whose stertorous breathing indicates that he is yet under the influence of his last night's debauch. Within reach of his hand his mother lies dying, but Ned Kelso knows it not, or cares but little; his arm is, as it were, powerless at his side, offering no support to her who is about to leave him forever. But here see the angel of the dawn who has just entered. How softly she steps to the side of the afflicted and takes her withered hand! It is now too late to offer any of the few comforts which she has in her little basket, but before the departing soul leaves its frail tenement she kneels alone and silently prays by the side of the dying woman. In a few minutes afterwards she gently closes the sightless eyes, and when Ned Kelso is aroused by the retiring evangelist, he finds himself in the chamber of death.

Oh! meek, unordained minister of God, your last faithful words may have again awakened hope, and painted out even in religious imagination the pearly gate of Paradise to another repentant sinner!

Notwithstanding the rough experience which I had already had of the rude inhabitants of the place, I was desirous of seeing something more of them on this my first visit, so that when I came among them again in a fortnight I might have some plan adopted for their spiritual and temporal benefit. Under the protecting care of Mrs. Edgar, and Simon, we therefore went to the huts. These were in long rows facing one another.

Piles of filth and garbage were accumulated in many places, more particularly close to the door-ways, and the stench was frequently most offensive. Hogs and fowl, —hens, ducks, and chickens,—were rooting, scratching, and searching among the heaps, leaving them now and then for a free tour within the dwellings, the inmates taking it as a matter of course. As for the huts, they looked to be dirty, crowded, dark dens, in which, I learned, that notwithstanding the efforts made for reclamation, more than double the number of men, women, and children, that they were capable of accommodating, ate, slept, and lived together in the most promiscuous and indecent manner. Old and young, male and female, the sick and the healthy, were by some means stowed away together in these pestiferous retreats, resulting in the most shameless immodesty—unchastity among women, and actual incestuous intercourse among nearly all. Marriage was almost unknown, paternal feeling scarcely existing, and children of tender years were forced to do the most laborious drudgery, sending the large majority of them to a premature grave. It was perhaps happy for many that they were thus snatched from a life of infamy during their early years, for among the degenerate population it could be plainly seen that the children not only inherited the gross physical forms and features of their parents, but also their mental tendencies, and immoral dispositions, leaving those who reached maturity just as vicious as their progenitors.

The amusements of these people corresponded to their surroundings, and were of the coarsest and most barbarous kinds. And as not one in a hundred could read the plainest print, any hour of leisure was hailed as an opportunity to descend to brutality. Consequently on the Sabbath, when relieved from actual labor in the mines, nearly all, if not engaged at some occupa-

tion in or around their houses, could be seen in several places setting dogs, or cocks, fighting, or actually fighting or wrestling themselves; and in these encounters, in which even women often took part, maudlin antagonists would kick, cut, and bruise one another in the most shocking manner. I found that the habit of disfiguring, and of biting or cutting off a finger, was quite prevalent, for I noticed that several of both sexes were without one or two of these; the very children also suffering in this manner, either from the brutal impulse of a parent, or through a spirit of wantonness or revenge among themselves; and it was but too well known that lying and theft were included only in the least of their vices.*

This Lord's Day was, of course, scarcely different from the others. Though a death had just taken place among them, it only seemed to urge them to a greater abandonment of all propriety. As we approached we could hear shouts and curses, and here and there could be seen little knots of people at their usual barbarous amusements. I did not care to go among them yet, for any reproof I might offer would likely be of no avail. Many frowned at me as we passed, and probably would have done worse were it not for my escort. I had been informed that the rector of the parish, and many of the clergy of the Established Church for miles around, had done much to embitter those ignorant people against dissenting preachers, particularly against the comparatively new sect, at the time, called Methodists. And when an opportunity offered they were sure to be insulted. However, were it not for a previous engagement, I would have remained until next evening, and

* As to the mutilation of the fingers, see an article in Chambers's Journal for June, 1864, entitled, "Among Queer People." And as to the wretched state of the pagan population of England, see "Parliamentary Blue Books," "Commissioners' Reports," the various accounts in the newspapers, and a work called the "Seven Curses of London," by Jas. Greenwood.

would have ventured a few admonitions at the funeral of Ned Stokes's mother, but death had no softening influence even among her own nearest relations. After close observation, what surprised me most was the deferential manner shown by all to Mrs. Edgar. What was the cause of her influence? They would sometimes jeer at Simon, but when she went near, or addressed a word, all would seem to grow demure, even the rudest or most violent would make no reply or offer resistance. I could not therefore help feeling that her presence now saved us probably from a repetition of ill-usage similar to that which I had received on the previous evening. Still I thought that unless I went among them, and showed a spirit of fearlessness, it would be almost useless to make a future attempt for their reformation.

While Mrs. Edgar was saying a few words by way of reproof to some of the most truculent, I addressed an old man who sat by, looking on at what he called the "spoart." No doubt in his younger days he was probably among the foremost in these cruel pastimes—for the scars on his face told the story—but now when his feeble limbs rendered him unable to do more than hobble to the place, it might be of his once ferocious strifes and triumphs, his eyes plainly enjoyed those which now engaged and elated, perhaps, his own children.

"My old friend, do you think the Almighty can look with approval on what you see over there? It is very wicked."

"Th' A'alma'etty!" replied the old man, with an idiotic leer. "Whoy, who bin he? E'eve niver heerd noot aboot him. If he doant loike it, why he maun toorn his hed t'other way. Waat's th' harm, waat's th' harm?"

"Not heard of God!" I asked, really amazed at the

old man's ignorance; and I added other expressions as to the goodness and power of the Deity.

"Weel, I moight ha' heeard summat abaat *him!*" he answered, reflectively, "bur iv he bin so good as 'ee tells, whoy be we so ba'ad? He ma'ad us, ee says, an' he ma'ad that daumd hawk that killed oor chickens t'ooother da'ay—he did."

Shocked at this reply, I asked him if he did not know the Lord's Prayer? He knew nothing of this, nor did he know the nature of prayer, or the need of supplication.

"Heer till un," continued the old man, "whoy shoold we pra'ay? Ee saays he knoos wa'at we wa'ant afore we a'ask, then why not gi it withoot th' aaskin'? 'Ecod! that's th' rummiest thing eev iver heerd on!'"*

Alas! it was useless for me at the time to try to penetrate so much ignorance. The old creature was plainly incorrigible, for, even in using my simplest arguments, some spirit of evil within him would prompt a reply or an inquiry, which, owing to his very limited faculties and comprehension, I felt myself unable to meet, or explain away to my satisfaction,—thus, in a manner, leaving my first effort among these people almost ineffectual.

While in conversation with the old man, Mrs. Edgar left us for a few minutes. I saw her speaking to two or three men remarkably like those who had attacked and assaulted me on my arrival. Her energetic manner convinced me that she was reproaching them for some

* A correspondent of an English paper in 1877-8 writes: "Encountering a group of children near Hartsbill I asked if any of them—they were of both sexes—could say the Lord's Prayer, and they told me they couldn't, for they had 'never 'eard ut'. One boatman could not even tell his ave, had never been to any kind of school, could not repeat the alphabet nor the Lord's Prayer, and knew nothing of religion beyond having a vague notion of the existence of a God. And yet, if one goes to a fashionable church here the odds are in favor of an announcement by the parson that the offertory will be devoted to the funds of the Society for the conversion of Ashantees, Hottentots, or Kaffirs."

offence, and that she was making a demand with which they seemed very reluctant to comply. Presently two of them, with a woman, went at a slow pace into one of the huts. Mrs. Edgar followed, and in less than ten minutes she joined us again. I saw by her pleased expression that she had likely gained her point with the wild set she had undertaken to reprove, and I am sure her gratification was greater than mine when she handed me my watch, on which I little expected ever again to set my eyes.

Next morning, after I took my departure, I turned around on a little hill to have another view of the humble house in which I had found shelter and kind friends. The one who occupied most of my thoughts at the moment stood with her little daughter at the door looking towards me. I instinctively waved my hand, and when my parting signal was returned, by some strange illusion the desolate region which they inhabited seemed changed into a green vale of peace and loveliness, and my hope then was that I might soon be able to visit that beautiful place again.

CHAPTER XI.

MY CO-WORKER.

I had made several visits to the mining district, and though I had not succeeded in making proselytes or converts, yet I had so far progressed as not to be looked on with positive scorn by the miners. A few had become civil, a few even obliging, and I could count a few whom I might say were my friends. I could go where I liked among them, and sometimes venture a reproof;

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and I seldom got a rough or angry reply except from some who were found to be intoxicated. Although my heart was not altogether in the work, I could call and formally pray in one of their hovels while most of the inmates knelt or stood listlessly around, but alas! I had so far made but little impression on the great majority of the people, for the true idea of religion seemed to be something beyond their mental grasp. Were I to associate it with the low and degrading superstitions to which most here were addicted, there was a possibility that in time some notion of what religion was, would be eliminated; but I could not follow such a course to gain adherents. I was aware that certain teachers did not hesitate to place the idol of a Pagan side by side with the statue of the Virgin or one of the saints, in order to impress the heathen believer in favor of the Christian faith, by leading him to fancy that Paganism and Christianity were in a manner identical. For this they claimed to have the authority of Paul, who said: "Being crafty I caught you with guile," but it is not to be supposed for a moment that the Great Apostle was capable of deception, like certain clergy we read of,† nor can it be believed that he would become "all things to all men" in the sense of joining or concurring with an idolator, to win the worshipper of idols. No! he must, I suppose, have had some grand object or motive in view which he considered justified him at the time in using such expressions. And as we at this remote period cannot fully understand the circumstances in which he probably was placed, we should not hesitate to take it for granted that these phrases, so often reflected on, were used with the best possible intention.

However, dealing with the words of Paul in an objectionable sense, I could not be "crafty" with the miners, nor would I attempt to "catch them with guile." I made an effort to explain our tenets in the simplest

† Rev. Dr. Croesby, of New York, for instance.

possible way, but no matter how I tried to reduce them, the doctrine of responsibility to God, of the sacrifice of his Son, and of the necessity of conversion, seemed to be almost beyond their comprehension, and to be regarded only as a kind of foolishness.

There were certain considerations which I think induced the half-wild people of this place to overcome the strong prejudices which they had at first entertained against me. Foremost of these was the influence of Mrs. Edgar in my favor. How she came to have so much control over them may be readily surmised—her kind acts and self-sacrifice. Next, I never went amongst them after my first visit without bestowing some trifling gifts among the children, speaking kindly to them, and to such of the women as I chanced to meet, and sometimes by taking food to the poor. There was a harmless policy in this, for I remember to have heard that, among half-starved savages, the missionary is often far more persuasive in the kitchen than he is in the church; and, lastly, I think most of the men were under the impression that I was of a fearless, determined disposition, one in fact not to be bullied or frightened; for I found that the opinion among many of them was, that I would as soon fight as pray. No doubt they were led to think this of me from the manner in which I had met their attacks on the first evening of my arrival in the district; and during my subsequent intercourse with them I never let them imagine that I was to be driven away as others had been.

Reluctant as I had been in the beginning to go to the mining district, and discouraged as I had been on my first arrival with the appearance of the desolate region and its squalid inhabitants, strange as it may seem every succeeding visit made the place look more agreeable until at last it had become really attractive. The wild, barren moor seemed to be changed to a wide plain of

the richest verdure; the heath shrubs, the scattered boulders, and even the stagnant pools, all looked as if planted and arranged there by skillful hands to ornament a vast green lawn. The miners' huts were no longer filthy hovels, but pleasant cottages; and the dull line of hills to the north appeared as if elevated to the dignity of blue mountains and crowned with a golden light to gladden the emerald expanse beneath them.

I often wondered how I realized such a change, and why it was, when I was absent, that I wished the time to hurry on so that the day of my regular appointment—once a fortnight—should again return. In no part of the circuit did I feel so much at home; and I remember how enlivened I always felt when on my way to a region which was, and had been, so forbidding to others. Oftentimes, when going along the bleak, lonely highways of the mining district, where neither hedge nor tree, nor cheerful scenes, far or near, came into view, still, let it be in sunshine or through rain, my mind would be agreeably pre-occupied, and while humming some hymn, tune, or some march, the image of one gentle person would be in my thoughts, one bright fire-side in my view, and a smile would glow upon my face while anticipating her fresh welcome.

Her! Who was she? I had no mother, no sister, no one in the endearing relation of wife, but, Oh! what a friend I esteemed Mrs. Edgar! For some time past she appeared to me as being one of the brightest ornaments of her sex, a pious, patient, beautiful creature, with one of the kindest hearts and most benevolent of dispositions. As previously stated, she had already had early afflictions, and, from what I had seen, it was my impression that, feeling for the deprivations of others, she came here—here to this gloomy region—to try and alleviate distress, to raise a neglected class from the state of degradation into which they had fallen, and to

spend her life, if need be, in making efforts to do good among an ignorant and impoverished community, who had evidently been shunned by the wealthy, despised by the proud, overlooked by the philanthropist, and, to a great extent, neglected and forsaken by the pious supporters of foreign missionary enterprises.

I must say that the more I saw of this self-denying woman the higher she was raised in my estimation. I owed her a debt of gratitude, I might say, for saving my life, and, not only for that, but for continued and sisterly acts of kindness. And, time after time, as I witnessed her devotion to the poor when she was comparatively poor herself, her unobtrusive ways, and her patient submission to trials and reverses, I held her in very great respect, and could not help feeling that I was singularly fortunate in being, in a manner, associated with her in exertions or the reclamation of the semi-barbarous people around her. Without her my efforts, religious or otherwise, would have been but of little avail.

How could I help thinking more and more of one who by numerous acts of kindness to all, had already won my greatest admiration? I found it impossible to resist the spell which her presence threw around me, and I was charmed with her unaffected demeanor. By day her image was now almost ever present, and few nights passed away without seeing her in my dreams. When I chanced to be absent in some remote part of the circuit, not having seen her for more than a week, I used to fancy that she was with me; and then, encouraging the pleasing illusion, I allowed my sanguine notions greater latitude, and thought how delightful it would be to have her accompany me around the great circuit of life and to be forever with me; and then, after having finished the grand round of our existence here, and witnessed together the varied scenes through-

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out life's tour, and the events incident to the journey—the bright and the gloomy, the joyous and the sad; and having done all we could to comfort the afflicted, to give hope to the desponding, and to lead wanderers into the way of peace and truth, how glorious it would be for us when "life's fitful fever" was past, to meet on Canaan's happy shore, to hail the dawn of our immortality, and to hear the comforting welcome of our Great Friend—"Well done, good and faithful servant—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

Ah! me! then I would think of how presuming I, an undistinguished laborer in the vineyard, must be to imagine that she, who was so much goodness and purity, would ever think of leaving the charge she had undertaken, were I to ask her to become my wife; for I must confess that circumstanced as I was I had thought that matrimony should not be dreamt of; yet now I had every intention to make a proposal. I had some way flattered myself that she had shown me more consideration than even a preacher should expect, and that at times when I ventured to speak with some feeling of affection, though not having the courage to be sufficiently explicit as to my real meaning, she would turn her calm, sad eyes kindly on me, and I would become cheered and delighted with their mute expressiveness. Yet was I not a preacher? and I knew that persons in my position were generally looked upon by sisters in the Lord with peculiar regard; and often when I was on the point of revealing the state of my heart, and telling her of my increasing desire to be nearer and dearer to her than to any one else in the world, I would suddenly become timid and try to give the few words I had ventured to use some awkward spiritual meaning, leaving myself to be again discomfited.

Matters went on in this way for some time, and I had

let many favorable opportunities pass when I might have had my fate decided, and got rid of that mental uneasiness which had for a period become very disquieting. I however finally determined that on my next visit I should declare my attachment and plead with her to assure my earthly happiness by consenting to become my wife.

The long-wished-for time arrived at last. Lately, I had been delighted to observe that Mrs. Edgar used to watch for my return. There was not indeed one intelligent person in the place with whom she could converse, and I could reasonably presume that even on that account alone she would be glad to have me come back, and be on the look-out for me. I generally managed to get there nearly at the very hour I promised, and this evening I could see her from the little hill on which I always halted to look towards the house. She stood at the door with her little daughter, May, and when I got to them and dismounted, the child ran to me to be kissed as usual. I had become very much interested in May, for I had often noticed that there was something in her face which led me to fancy that it bore a resemblance to some other face which I must once have seen, but which I was now unable to determine.

After tea that evening, Mrs. Edgar and I sat in the room together. Little May had been sent to bed with the new doll which I had brought her, and a few friends who had been to visit us had taken their departure. The old man and his wife who lived with my hostess were busy in some other part of the house, and now here was another wished-for opportunity.

It was near the end of winter; the days were getting longer. We spoke of the rapid flight of time, of how the months would quickly pass, and I said it would not be long until Conference met again, and that I should perhaps then be sent far away to some other circuit among strangers.

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After this there was a pause. The night was mild, and the moonlight filled the room. We sat near the window, and as Mrs. Edgar gazed up at the bright orb, I imagined that her face looked unusually pale and placid.

"How beautifully calm," she said, "the moon appears to us at such a distance—like the bright and peaceful home of the blest; yet we have reason to believe that it is convulsed by the most terribly disturbing forces!"

"Yes," I replied, "it is like many a tranquil exterior which has hidden fires beneath, or like many a fair human face that would hide troubles of the heart which must not be made known to others."

She glanced at me for a moment, a faint sigh followed my remark, and then she turned her eyes upward again. I stole another look at her pallid features, pallid in the moonlight. Her marble countenance appeared like that of an angel, reflecting the radiance of the Great Throne, and at the moment I felt as if in the presence of some pure spirit.

"Who is without a secret sorrow?" I asked. "Who? Very few indeed. The fairest flower while shedding its fragrance around may have some germ of decay within its petals; the gayest face in a crowd may be flushed with the failing current of a hopeless heart; and how many a stately form passes along unsuspected and admired while bearing a weight of secret woe which sooner or later must crush it to the earth! Oh! the untold silent griefs that bring so many down to a premature grave!"

While she was still looking up, I saw her bosom heave, and another faint sigh escaped; the moonlight sparkled in her flooded eyes, and a pearl of purest radiance fell and rested on either cheek. Hastily brushing these away, she looked at me and said:—

"God's greatest comfort and support are needed by those who have private afflictions, and who are obliged to hide from all the sin or the sorrow that is preying on the heart."

"God will comfort them," I replied, "He has promised to do so. But human sympathy can also do much to assuage such distress," and then, almost overcome by my feelings, I raised her hand to my lips and said:—

"Oh! Mary!—let me call you by that name now!—you little know how long I have desired to tell you that I imagined you had some withering care which you kept to yourself, and that it would be my greatest happiness were I able in any degree to share your troubles; that you had not only my deepest sympathy, but my highest regard; and, I must say it, still more my best and fondest love—Oh! yes, my purest and tenderest love. Do not look coldly on such an avowal. It may be that I am unwise and imprudent in going so far, but I cannot help it. Oh! Mary, you are the only woman besides my mother that I ever loved, and my heart was bursting to let you hear that secret, a secret which I have tried to keep but can keep no longer."

Without the slightest simulation of surprise, or least trace of affectation in her manner, she looked kindly at me for a few moments, and in her softest voice said:—

"I ought to be sorry to hear you say to me that which you have just said, but, from what I know of you, it would be hard for me to treat such an avowal as you have made with disregard. There is not a true woman but what should feel proud of the offer of a good man's love, even though she should be unable to return it as he might deserve or desire. Believe me, your disclosure is very gratifying to me, but—"

"Oh!" said I, interrupting her, "do not say that my offer cannot be accepted, or that you will be unable to give me the encouragement which I so fully crave."

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"I shall not say that," she replied, "I could not say
so at present to you. I shall only say now that you
have perhaps been indiscreet in making such an offer
to one of whom you know so little. Six months ago we
were strangers. You estimate me by what you have
seen of me since we became acquainted. You know
nothing of my life previous to that time."

"I want to know nothing of it," I replied, "I judge
you, as you intimate, by what I have seen, and with
this I am satisfied. I think I know something of human
nature, and I claim that my judgment will be no way
defective when I say that you have a kind, gentle heart,
incapable of the least deception."

She was affected by the warmth of my manner. I
still held her hand, which she made no effort to with-
draw, and then I continued:—

"I have not sought to know anything of your pre-
vious life. I have no right, nor have I the least desire,
to make any inquiry concerning it. If you have a
secret which you would like to preserve, I shall not
trouble you to reveal it; but if you have a grief which
I can share, do not keep it to yourself."

Her mild gaze was again turned upon the bright
moon, to which many a sad confession has been made
in the privacy of silent night. And then, as if follow-
ing up my advantage, I spoke on.

"Surely I cannot be less generous than you have
been towards me. You have never inquired about my
previous history. I have come here in the character of
a preacher of peace and good will to men, but it is not
very long since I had an occupation or profession which
ought to be considered the very opposite. It is even
probable that I have taken life."

She gave me a look of surprise when I made this
statement, but giving her no opportunity to say a word,
I continued:—

"You must not misunderstand me. I have committed no crime in the eye of the law; I have not shocked society by what is euphemistically termed by lenient but unfair indulgence to the stronger sex, an indiscretion. I have betrayed no trusting heart, but, Oh! I have been most ungrateful to one who loved me, and I madly deserted her at a time when I should have remained to be her principal stay and support."

These seeming contradictory statements caused her to look at me again.

"Oh! could *you* do that?" she asked, in a low, melancholy voice.

There was a painful expression in her face; she spoke no other word, but her lips were compressed, and she made a little effort to withdraw her hand from mine. I grasped it more firmly, and said:—

"Stay! stay! do not judge me too hastily; let me explain."

I then gave her a short history of my life, omitting certain irrelevant details. I went back to the time that my little companion was killed by lightning at my side; that in consequence of what my mother had deemed my miraculous escape, of how she had perhaps unwisely dedicated me to the Lord; of my father's death, and of our removal to London; of my mother's marriage to Mr. Shaw; of my wicked indignation against her; of my enlistment and subsequent troubles and sufferings; and then of my return to England, and of my sorrowful adventure in the old churchyard of St. Leonard's, when I found myself unwittingly present at my mother's funeral, and how, when all had departed, I had wept and prayed alone over her grave.

I had scarcely finished the recital when a tear dropped upon my hand. I looked once more on the mild features of her who had given me this evidence of genuine sympathy. Her eyes as well as mine were suffused

with tears. Had I awakened tender emotions in my favor? I begged of her to say a word which would relieve me of every doubt. I pressed her hand in my urgent mood, and when she replied in a low, tremulous voice, she said:—

“You give me the credit of being incapable of deception. I shall therefore be plain with you, for you have earned my confidence. You have now a right to know of a great trouble which I had before coming to this place, and then, after you have heard me, and if what I shall have told you will not alter your opinion of me, then I shall pray God to enable me to give you a proper reply, and to sustain me under a fresh affliction should I feel obliged to decline your generous offer, of which I am most unworthy.”

CHAPTER XII.

A BETRAYAL.

What was the nature of the revelation which she was about to make? She sat for some moments in silence while she seemed to be absorbed in thought. Presently she left the room and returned in a few moments, bringing what looked like a small package of letters. She then seated herself at a little distance from me with her back to the window, evidently with the intention of keeping the moonlight from her face, so that her features should be shaded. Why shaded, when she was going to tell me something of her own innocent life? Still there was a pause. Was she reluctant to commence a tale that would show her struggles with adversity, or her trials during the pressing necessities

which perhaps had forced her when left a widow to become a recluse among people poorer than she was herself? After some hesitation she commenced, and with downcast look, her low, soft voice reached my ear like the murmuring sound as of some one speaking at a distance.

"I scarcely know how to begin," she said, "my story is one of sorrow and misfortune, one of a kind which has become too common, and which, alas! as experience has shown, is one which brings but little pity or sympathy to the many poor suffering creatures who so much need it; however, what I have to tell may have the effect of partially relieving my mind from a weight which has pressed on it, Oh! so heavily, for the last three years, and of winning at least your pitiful consideration for me—for her now before you—who was but a short time ago unexpectedly brought to the very verge of despair. And, were it not for the superintending Power that has always mercifully guided those who have humbly begged for guidance; I should, while in a state bordering on distraction, have taken that last plunge by which so many have sought oblivion of human woes.

"A little more than three years ago I was in my father's house in London, my happy home, surrounded by every comfort which a man in moderate circumstances, but respectable in position, could secure for his family. I had a brother about two years older than I was, one of the best and kindest ever a sister loved. I can now remember our happy childhood, our youthful pastimes, our cheerful school days, and our bright expectant future. Then when we grew older I also remember how sorry I was when he had to be sent to an academy to learn certain higher branches, foolishly supposed at the time to be beyond those suitable for girls. This I may say was our first separation. After this he was entered as a student in the office of a leading

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attorney, and as he had good natural abilities, my father had great hopes of the future success of his son. In the meantime my education was not neglected. In addition to what I had previously been taught, lessons in music, painting, and French, were given me in accordance with the prevailing opinion that these were accomplishments which should belong to females exclusively.

"When I was about eighteen years of age I formed the acquaintance of a young man, who was a particular friend of my brother. Indeed I had several such acquaintances, for my father was always glad to see my brother's friends and to entertain them at our house. I was no doubt perhaps vain enough to think that I was a cause of attraction to most of them, for I was said to be handsome, and the young men were always ready to pay me compliments such as they thought would be most pleasing to a young beauty. The young man of whom I first spoke was, however, by far the most attentive. He professed to be greatly enamoured with me. I have every reason to believe that he was sincere in this profession; and his manner and appearance being such as would in most cases probably win the affections of any woman by whom he had become engrossed, I gradually reciprocated his attachment; his advances were almost irresistible, and I loved him. When he was absent on any business we corresponded—here are his letters—a day without seeing him seemed to be a day without sunlight; we finally became engaged, and with the consent of all parties interested, we were to have been married on his next birth-day.

Ah! me, how dream-like this seems now! How saddening is the recollection of those past joys! We had been left much together and permitted to enjoy each other's society almost without interruption. This calm soft light reminds me of the moonlight walks we had

together when life was to be as bright and as placid as the luminous beams then stretched upon the bosom of the shining Thames, and now, when I can contrast the radiant hopes in which we then indulged with the deep sad gloom which too soon followed, it seems that my passage along the future is to be through a dreary waste without any ray of earthly expectation to be seen even in the far distance."

I interrupted her here by saying that it was not wisdom to despond. I trusted that instead of passing through a desert she would find her further pathway strewn with flowers. I said she must take fresh heart, for that she was not the only one left a widow early in life. Was not God the special protector of the widow?

"A widow?" she repeated, looking at me sadly. "Alas! I have not the consolation of being a widow. You look surprised, but it is part of my duty now to tell you that I am not what I appear. Oh! no, no, no, I am not a widow! Even that sad condition would be even now a blessing. In strict justice I ought to be considered a widow, but legally I am not entitled to that melancholy claim. I have, however, assumed that character, because in reality it is the nearest approach to that which I am—but I shall let you know all."

"To my delight the day of our nuptials was approaching, and the preparations for that event had already commenced. Oh! how anxious I was that the ceremony should take place, as I had the most urgent reasons for becoming a wife, cogent reasons only known to another; and as day after day passed I often used to have a feeling of apprehension lest anything should occur to prevent our connubial relation; a calamity which would cause me to be shunned by others, and bring upon me one of the greatest misfortunes which could fall upon a woman."

"The morning on which our marriage was to have

taken place came at last; a morning of clouds and mist, not a sunbeam to be seen. I am not superstitious, but an unaccountable feeling of depression came over me; not because the weather appeared so unpropitious, but a dread as if some impending calamity were soon to happen. I was arrayed as a bride. Visitors came. The clergyman was in attendance, all was ready, but though the appointed hour had come no bridegroom as yet had made his appearance. Another hour of terrible suspense to me had passed, still he came not. Looks of mute surprise passed from one to another. Inquiries were made, and messengers sent in every direction; some accident it was supposed had happened him. My parents and my brother seemed bewildered, for they could not even suspect that I was to be a victim of the basest treachery. But, before night came, the terrible truth had flashed upon my mind, my heart sunk, and I had to be taken to my apartment insensible.

"A month passed, a month like one long night having a succession of wild and terrible dreams. I had the sympathy of friends, but Oh! I had a dreadful secret, which but a short time I must soon reveal, and which when made known would alienate nearly all, and leave me comparatively friendless. What a blow it would be to my too trustful parents, what a humiliation to my brother, what a disgrace to myself! Before another month was ended we heard tidings indirectly from the man who should have been my husband. Full of compunction he wrote to his sister, telling her that on the very morning on which I was to have been made his bride, under a sudden wicked impulse, he had become intoxicated, and while in that condition he enlisted, and that he was now in Belgium with the army under Lord Wellington. He expressed great contrition for his desertion of me, and sent the most solemn assurances that if he ever returned to England every amends in his

power should be made, and that I should become his wife.

"His sister then came to condole with me, but, alas! when she ascertained my true condition, her sympathies grew cold, and she soon left me. My brother, smarting under the great wrong done me, became dissipated, and balked of the revenge he would have taken, left the country, and has never since been heard of. I soon became a mother, but long before this was known most of the friends I had had from my earliest recollection dropped away. One by one left us, never to return. I had evidently in their estimation, as well as in that of the many who knew but little of the true circumstances, committed some unpardonable sin. Had I been wilfully guilty of some hideous offence, I could not have been treated more unmercifully. I was held to be the culpable one, while for him, the betrayer, every possible excuse was made, even by women who must have known how I had been deceived. We were therefore in a manner left alone. My parents were almost daily mortified by the slights of former friends and the cold recognition of former acquaintances. A few expressed pity, but fewer still evidenced it by sincerity of action. My father, unable to endure such treatment any longer, left London and took us to York. He died there within three months, and before the year was ended my poor mother followed him. With but very limited means for one in my condition, I and my child were then, alas! left among comparative strangers.

"How I struggled there for months to be recognized as one deserving of support and encouragement! None can ever truly know what efforts I made to win respect and confidence, but these were scarcely gained when rumors and reports were circulated to my injury, and it seemed that do what I could, society—Christian society—was against me. Even preachers of the gospel came

as if it were an unpleasant duty to give me advice and formal cautions which were quite unnecessary. With the little means at my disposal, I had opened a small confectioner's shop, but this soon began to fail me, very few seemed disposed to deal with me. I had to give this up, and then I moved to another town a few miles distant and tried to open a little school for children. I might have made a living at this, but in a short time, by some means, evil reports followed, the few pupils I had were taken away, some parents treated me with scorn, while others were actually indignant at having been induced, as they said, to place their children under my corrupting influence. This incessant, unrelenting persecution soon injured my health. I felt greatly cast down and wished for death, and were it not for my child, were it not for the admonitions of conscience and the protecting arm of the Almighty, the terrible weight of woe which I had to bear would have left me without a single hope, and I think I might have been tempted to self-destruction.

"I must here, with a feeling of pain, relate another circumstance which greatly added to my sorrow and mortification. A certain clergyman, having no doubt heard something of my history as well as of the injurious reports concerning me, called on several occasions and repeatedly professed the greatest concern for my welfare. He used to bring little presents for the child, and he expressed himself as ready to do me any service in his power. Of course I was only too glad to find such a friend. A prominent and highly-esteemed minister, such as he was said to be, could aid me in many ways, and, above all, perhaps relieve me from a share of the undeserved odium which was making my life so wretched. How gratefully I thanked him! In all sincerity I looked upon him as a Providential friend who met me at a most trying period. He had a family.

His wife was known as one of the most benevolent of women; yet there were rumors that they did not live happily together, and I was rather surprised to find that though his visits to me were frequent, yet *she* never came. Were one in her position to countenance me, I could still venture to hope for a change of feeling in my favor, but how shocked was I when I learned by the merest chance that instead of being inclined to favor me, she looked upon me as a designing woman who was encouraging her husband's weakness, and artfully luring him to serve my own vile purposes! Oh! what an astounding blow this was! I knew nothing against the man at the time, but on his next visit, when he had the effrontery to make me an infamous proposal, I understood all, his motives became apparent, and though I upbraided his deceit, and denounced his shameful conduct, yet he offered no apology, but he left, telling me that I was only simulating indignation, and that he felt confident I should yet change my mind and accept his terms.

"What a sad truth this is to relate, and what additional grief it has caused me to learn on the most undoubted authority, that he is not the only one of his class who, having from his peculiar position in society won the confidence of the too trustful and unsuspecting, has tried to tempt such as I am, and others under his vicious influence, from the path of rectitude!

"About this time I chanced to read in one of the papers some comments on a missionary meeting which had been held in the town. The remarks of the writer went to show that while large sums were annually sent out of England to try and have the wild natives of distant lands civilized and converted to Christianity, there was actually a wilder, more ignorant, and more brutal class, as it were, at our own doors, which needed greater missionary attention than the distant foreigners. The

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account of an eye-witness was then given of what the people of the place were, of their wretched condition morally and socially, and such an appeal was made in their behalf that I then and there determined to cast my lot among them, to do them all the good in my power, and to try if I could not win more sympathy and kindness from the rude mining population of this wild, dreary district, than I had found even among those who claimed to be philanthropists and Christians.

"I have been here now for more than a year. How lonely I was at first! I came among these people poor and unknown, and when they found that I was in a manner dependent on them, the rude welcome they gave me was in singular contrast with the unfeeling treatment I had received from the so-called civilized world which I had left behind. So far I have not regretted coming. No one disdains me, and I have comparative peace of mind. I have labored in my humble way to reprove, to instruct, and to reform; and to some extent I have been more successful than I ever expected. There is, as you see, yet much to do. I have their respect and good will. Oh! what a comfort to have the respect of some human being again! I have still, as you have witnessed, much influence over them. They imagine that they are an oppressed people. I know they have been neglected and despised, and I have reason to believe that in many cases great wrong has been done them. Ideas to this extent prevail among them which have led to recklessness and often to revenge; but this I know, that if they feel convinced you wish to assist them in any way, though they may be stubborn and intractable for a time, yet in the greater number of cases they will yield like children and remain submissive.

"This is my story. I know it is different from what you expected. I have hidden nothing from you. I

want you to look over these letters of *his*; they will confirm much of what I have told you. I value your good opinion. What I have related may no doubt cause you to alter your intentions respecting myself. I expect nothing else, and am quite prepared for it. You must take time for consideration. I value your friendship, and should you still think me worthy of a renewal of your offer, I shall with God's help and as your true friend take that course which I shall feel convinced will be the best for your future welfare."

I held the package of letters in my hand for a few moments before I could make a reply. She was perfectly calm, and, apart from any other consideration, the nature of her wrongs had already won for her my deepest sympathy. I cannot deny that her story was in one important respect different from what I had expected, and that a feeling approaching to that of caution had now possessed me. But then was she not a noble, truthful woman, who had just given me the best evidence of her inability to deceive? and, besides, it struck me that of my own previous knowledge I was able to corroborate the truthfulness of her relation. There was now scarcely a doubt in my mind but that I had discovered in her one for whom I had long made useless inquiries, and that I had at last an opportunity of delivering a dying message to the woman for whom it was intended.

"It seems to me," said I, "that I have it Providentially in my power to give you some satisfactory information regarding him who brought you so much early sorrow. I think I am safe in saying that you are the person for whom I have long sought, and for whom the words of a dying man were confided to me for delivery."

A nervous start caused her to turn her eyes on mine with a look of eager inquiry. Her face seemed paler,

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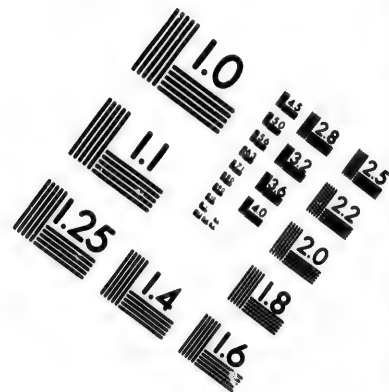
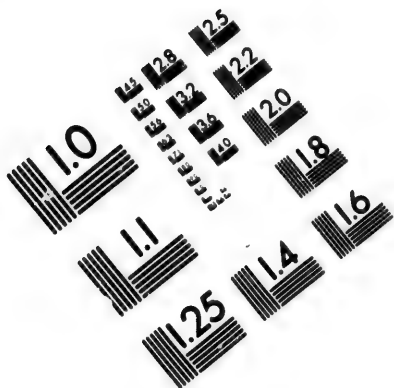
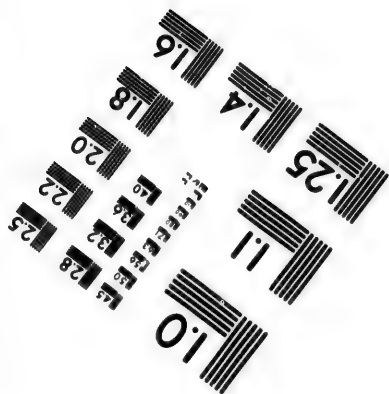
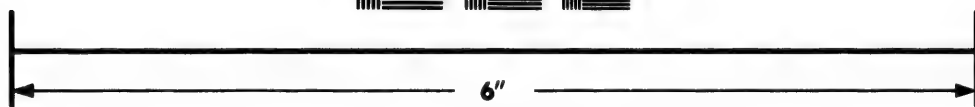
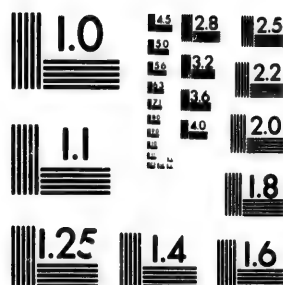


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and there was an excitement in her manner which I had never before witnessed; and then, grasping my arm, she exclaimed:—

"His dying words! Oh! God!—Oh! Lord! his words of repentance!"

"Yes," I continued, "I heard his words of repentance, I witnessed his tears, I listened to his solemn prayer for mercy and pardon, and I know that he pleaded with God to have pity and compassion on you and to be your help and protection."

"Merciful Heavens! Then you know he is dead? Are you sure of all this? Oh! are you certain that there is no possible mistake as to his identity?"

"None now," I slowly replied. "But listen to this and you will be convinced. I heard Richard Hammerton's last prayer for the woman he had deceived." (She started at the sound of this name.) "With the finger of death on his brow, he gave me the address of one Mary Edgar, and begged of me in the most solemn manner to try and find her on my return to England, to plead for her pardon, and to tell her that she was in his last thoughts. I know now that you are the betrayed—that you are that forsaken one—Mary Edgar!"

"Alas! I am, and he was Richard Hammerton. I deplore the unfortunate man's premature doom; I pardon him for the great wrong done me, as I expect pardon from Heaven; and I humbly hope that his repentance has been acceptable to the Almighty."

She appeared greatly affected by the unexpected intelligence she had just received, her eyes filled, her lips trembled, then came a heavy sigh, and then followed a rush of tears as if some pent-up torrent of woe had at last found a means of escape.

Taking the opportunity, in a little time afterwards, I gave her an account of how I had chanced to find Sergeant Hammerton among the wounded in an hos-

pital, after the battle of Waterloo. I told her of our many conversations on religious topics; of the dying around us; of his depression, his remorse, and of his doubts and fears; of how we had prayed for mercy; and finally, of his last message for her given just before he had passed away; and when I ended the melancholy recital, I could see that notwithstanding his shameful abandonment of her, she nobly forgot her own great wrongs and uttered her forgiveness.

In our further conversation on this subject, she told me that she was much surprised at my discovery of her. She had thought it would be impossible for any person to find out who she was, but now she admitted that I was plainly directed by the finger of Providence.

I replied that it was some time before I had the least suspicion that she was the person for whom I had sought; that the remarkable likeness of her child to some one I must have seen had first set me thinking. Then there was something in her name. The name of Edgar was common enough, but when I had learned that she was called "Mary,"—"Mary Edgar,"—the name mentioned by Sergeant Hamnerton, the coincidence was, I thought, singular; but when I heard of how she had been deserted on the morning she was to have been married, my conviction as to her identity became positive, and that she was the very Mary Edgar I had been in search of.

"But tell me," I asked, "in assuming the character of a widow, why did you not take the name of 'Hamnerton'?"

"Because," she replied, "I was not legally his wife. Even had he returned to claim me and to offer me that position, I should have been obliged to reject him. I could never marry one who had so recklessly betrayed my confidence. To him I should have been a widow forever."

How could I help admiring the stern nobility of this wronged and persecuted woman! The slight prejudice that had been formed in my mind against her within the last half-hour was but short-lived and had already given way; and now, after having heard all, I could have trusted, and honored, and loved her more than ever. I would have spoken to this effect, but she seemed in a melancholy mood and begged me to allow her to retire; and feeling that it would not be prudent at the time to say any more on the subject, we parted for the night, and when I arose in the morning determined to renew my proposal, I was told that she had left the house about dawn to visit a sick woman, and had left word that she would not return until after my departure.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FADING FLOWER.

Fully three weeks had passed before I was able to return to the mining district. I had had three weeks to revolve an important subject in my mind. At her request I had read the letters which she had received from Richard Hammerton. They were full of love and promises of devotion, and were in many ways quite sufficient to mislead any unsuspecting devoted woman. Alas! how her confidence had been misplaced! After all, I think if I had taken three months I could have come to no other conclusion than that Mary Edgar, the betrayed one, was the noblest woman I had ever met; the woman above all others who would be the most suitable to be my wife. Particularly sensitive as I am by

nature to any personal slights, I was willing to take her in preference to any other, even were I by so doing to be frowned upon by the whole community. Hand in hand with such a true friend, I could go through life, little caring for what the prejudiced leaders of society might be uncharitable to say against one who was at heart perhaps infinitely better and purer than themselves. From my own knowledge of social and domestic matters, and from the intimate acquaintance I have had of the sad personal history of others, I am convinced that many a wronged woman would be respected, and many an unfortunate creature who has been driven to a life of infamy, would receive more kind and charitable treatment and consideration from men, and might in numerous cases be thoroughly reformed, were it not for the inhuman course pursued towards them by their pious, pretentious, scornful sisters who may perhaps have never been cruelly tried or artfully tempted.

The winter had almost passed away; we had lately had some wet days and bleak winds, but this day as I rode on cheerfully towards the wild region where I knew I would be most welcome, the aspect of Nature was very genial, and the solitary places along the lonely road seemed glad in the warm sunlight of returning spring. Numerous little flowers were already looking up at the clear sky; many streams with murmuring cadence rushed merrily along in their winding course, and birds in an ecstasy of delight flew about from rock to tree, and could be heard twittering and singing in almost every direction. Unattractive as the scene would most probably have appeared to others, I enjoyed the stern landscape; and the rough highway which led to the sterile plain that now lay between me and the faint line of distant hills, was like a smooth flowery avenue guiding me to happiness. How pleasant were my musings at that particular time! And now when I remember the day-

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dream I had on that occasion, among the bright visions which accompanied me, I can see the tender eyes, the meek look, and the chastened expression of the angel of my heart who was soon, too soon, to be transferred to a coveted sphere of hoped-for honor and distinction.

It was nearly sunset when I drew up again at the little hill from which I could have a view of the old brick house and its surroundings. What a place of sweet contentment and repose it seemed to be! A stream of soft red light fell in front of the door-way, and already a little sun-lit face with a cherub-smile was looking towards me. I had no doubt been expected, and the child must have been the first to notice my coming; for she rushed into the house probably to tell that she saw me. She quickly returned, leading out Simon Blair by the hand, and she led him on until they met me several yards distant from the house, and then I had to take her up before me on the saddle, and give her a ride to the door-step. I had scarcely time to say a word to Simon, for May seemed determined to engage my whole attention. I had to give her the little present that I had brought her, and while she was prattling away, I looked for the other face which I most wished to see, but as yet it had not made its appearance. I missed its longed-for smile, and upon inquiry I hurriedly learned from Simon that more than a week ago Mrs. Edgar, while visiting a sick woman, had got wet in a heavy shower when returning, and was now confined with a bad cold.

Little May used often to call me "Pa," and now, just as I had dismounted, she ran into the house and cried, "Ma! Ma! Pa is come! Pa is come!" When I entered, I saw a slight form seated near the fire and wrapped in a heavy shawl. The change already in her looks was to me startling. Her smile was, however, the same, but just as she was about to speak, a heavy fit of coughing

seized her, a hollow ominous cough, that almost took away her breath, and one that made me feel very uneasy.

"It will be nothing," said she, when she was able to speak; "the weather a few days ago was cold and rainy, and having got wet in a shower while some distance from home, I neglected to change my clothes immediately on my return. I felt chilled at the time; next day I was feverish, and since that I have a constant pain here," and she placed her hand over her breast. "Sometimes I scarcely feel it, at other times it is very acute; still I feel better to-day, and now that you are come again, I think I shall be able to bear this affliction more submissively."

Alas! her gentle words conveyed after all but little encouragement, for I saw at once by her condition that it would require the greatest care and perhaps the most skillful treatment to restore her to her usual health; and when she saw how troubled I was concerning her, she made every possible effort to appear better and to be as cheerful as ever.

Simon Blair and his wife, being the nearest neighbors, had been very constant in their attendance, and had rendered Mrs. Edgar every assistance in their power. Many of the poor miners and their wives had also called, bringing many little necessities which they thought would be required, and I was informed that their kind inquiries and offers of service were very touching. While tea was getting ready we sat around the fire, and I was glad to be able to entertain the poor patient with agreeable conversation, and by relating the most pleasing news of the day which I could communicate. Occasionally a spell of coughing would disturb our conversation, but it was not long until I was pleased to find that these were becoming less frequent and violent, and that she for whom I was so much concerned, was now a little better.

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Having many days previously made up my mind to press my offer on this visit, and to have, if possible, a clear and decided answer, I waited until tea was over, and little May sent to bed. Again we sat alone, but since my arrival the weather had changed. The night was far different from the calm moonlight we had had when I first made my proposal. It was now raining, and had got much colder, and as the chill blast swept around outside with a moaning sound, we felt the cheerful fire in the room more attractive and comfortable. The sudden change of the weather led me to speak of the instability of human affairs and of the many strange mutations which are constantly taking place in our relations towards one another. Old friends almost suddenly and unexpectedly separated, perhaps never again to meet on earth; the parent parted from the child, brother from brother, and sister from sister,—mountains, seas, or deserts, it may be, severing them, until the lapse of time, of long, long years, has nearly caused form and feature to fade from the memory. Such separations are particularly sad, but perhaps sadder still are the estrangements which arise from the discovery that those in whom we once trusted, and with whom we had often taken sweet counsel, were jealous, envious, ungrateful, and deceptive, and no longer worthy of our confidence. Such a discovery must be most painful; for while we can communicate with tried friends who may be in a distant part of the world, yet with others still near or around us from whom we may have unhappily been alienated, we can have no further intercourse or association.

"But, Mary," said I, "we shall never be separated until the Lord takes one or the other from the scene of those earthly trials, and then who goes first to the heavenly home will longingly await the arrival of the other. Will not this be so, Mary?"

I took her hand; it was hot, her eyes were bright, her face was flushed, and her breathing rather heavy. With a faint voice she replied:—

“What if I should go first—and it might be sooner than you expect? Would you be willing to remain here alone, looking away to the remote land—the Canaan to which I may have departed?”

“You shall not go!” I replied hastily, “no, not at least for years. Oh! Mary, we must not part! I have a claim on you. I feel that God has placed you in my way, and now—yes, now—I want your answer to my offer.”

“What if God has a greater claim, Henry?”

It was the first time she called me by name, and Oh! how dear she was to me at that moment!

“What if God has a greater claim, would you dispute His right, would you murmur, would you hesitate to give him the preference?”

She spoke in a manner so calm and solemn, that recognizing for a moment the possibility of her being taken from me, I had to sob, and, in spite of all I could do, tears filled my eyes, and I could merely exclaim—

“If I am to make such a sacrifice, may Heaven have pity on me!”

“God, you know, is kind and gracious,” she continued, “and if he afflicts his children, it may be, as no doubt it will be, for a good purpose; and you also know that he has a healing balm for every wound, and a comfort the world knows not of for every sorrow.”

“I know he has,” I replied, “and God has sent you to me an inestimable treasure that will make even this vale of tears a paradise. My heart is centred in you, Mary! I feel that it cannot be sinful to love, and I cannot be content until I can call you mine.”

“I may have been sent for a purpose to teach you the uncertainty of all earthly enjoyment,” she said, in

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the same solemn manner. "We are all too ready to form idols and to bow down and worship them. How often does God in his mercy sweep them away from our sight! I would not willingly have you cast down, or say a word to cloud your hopes of happiness, but what are the transitory things of life but idols on which we too readily set our affections? and Oh! what are these compared with the glories of the life to come?"

"They may be but vanity and vexation of spirit," I again replied, "but, dear Mary, if the hopes I have fixed on you are delusion, this earth will be to me but as a dreary desert, and life itself will have scarcely an attraction."

"Do not murmur at the dispensations of Providence," said she. "Only let the spirit of God enter even the most desert places, and they will bloom like a garden, your heart will then glow with gratitude, and you can make life happy by devoting it to his service and to that of his suffering creatures."

"We murmur, nevertheless," I replied. "Why should there be so much suffering? Why should it be necessary that there should be so much affliction? Can God take delight in chastening his creatures? Could he not devise other means to win their affections? Why should this earth with its thousand glories, with its mountains, hills, and valleys, with its green fields and blue skies, with its streams, its rivers, its lakes, and its islands, with its flowers and its sunshine,—why should we be told to look on these with indifference, or on this fair world as a place of sin and sorrow? God made it as it is, made it for man's use, for his pleasure and delight. If these things are idols, *He* is the maker; and if they are attractive, why should we be blamed for their influence over us? I cannot understand this. I avow the idea is most perplexing, that things should be so ordered as that the majority of mankind should be unhappy."

"It may be His will," she answered, "suffering and submission is the lot of man."

"But why should this be so? Why did God give us strong desires for earthly enjoyments if these are scarcely to be gratified?" I asked, in a half-petulant mood. "Why give us eyes to see, ears to hear, or hearts to love, if hearing and seeing and loving the beautiful things which have been placed in our way are to be counted an evidence of our sinful degeneracy? How the heart is apt to rebel against such a decision, and at times what horrible doubts will come when we are told that these—yes, all!—should be despised for the Heaven we have never seen! With you here, Mary, I would ask for nothing more celestial!"

I was strangely dissatisfied at the moment, and the thought of being deprived of that which my heart most coveted made me like a thousand others too ready to oppose the designs of the Almighty.

She gave me a mild reproof by saying, "Henry, it is the *man* who spoke that, and not the Christian. The love of the world is even with you still too strong."

"The world is beautiful because you are in it, Mary! Were you to leave it, how desolate indeed it would be to me! Sterile and lonely as this place appeared at first, because it is your home it now looks like a garden of the richest flowers, and I would fain have you stay here forever!"

"Oh!" said she, sadly, "what a short period may be included in the forever of this life—a few years at most! My stay may now be but a few *weeks* or days. What a glorious world that will be where there shall be no more suffering, where the Lord himself shall be present to wipe away the tears from every eye, and where there shall be immortality and eternal life!"

There was something in her words, in her subdued manner, and in the resigned expression of her counten-

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ance, that almost bid me be silent. I felt as if I were in the presence of some superior being, and that at this particular time it would be wrong, and in a manner unfeeling, to press her attention to matters not in keeping with the pious and spiritual tendency of her inclinations. I also noticed that she appeared wearied and languid, and that she needed rest; so, after having offered up a fervent prayer in her behalf, I left her reluctantly and retired for the night, and though it was some hours before I could compose myself to sleep, when that came it brought a dream to which I could give no other interpretation than that there was to be an approaching sorrow, and that the Lord had an intention concerning me to try me as it were by fire, to test my faith and confidence in Him, and to ask me to yield up some treasure of the heart to which all others were incomparable.

With all the fortitude which religion is said to give, how the heart still shrinks from making such a sacrifice! Notwithstanding all that may be said about prayer and faith, and trust and resignation, our feelings will yet remain terribly human; and to be called on to part with some kind, true, and valued friend, some dear child on whom our hopes are fixed, or on the tender partner of the bosom; to be asked to yield up one or all of these without murmur or complaint, is, it must be admitted, really beyond human possibility! Our emotions of love, of joy, or of sorrow, will remain during life; they cannot be circumscribed even within the boundaries of Heaven; and none can be bereft of these, no matter by what influence, unless by some degeneration which dehumanizes, leaving man, in one sense, actually in a lower and more degraded condition than that of the primal savage from which it is said he has gradually ascended! Oh! that Heaven would mercifully spare many and lessen the bitter pangs which must follow from premature and unexpected bereavements!

A beautiful Sabbath morning followed. It was rather late when I left my room, and the sun was shining brightly when we met at breakfast. Mrs. Edgar had spent a good night and felt much better. I was quite cheered by the change, and as the weather was mild I prevailed on her to sit outside and inhale the pure air and the odor of the early flowers from the little garden in which she took so much interest. We had an open-air service that morning, and a larger number of persons than usual attended. Many I know came more out of respect for her than to hear what I had to deliver. Before the conclusion, our prayers were for her, and many a hearty "Amen!" was given for the restoration of the afflicted one.

I made but few visits that day, preferring to remain near her. Our conversation was mostly on spiritual things, and I remember she dwelt much on the glories of Heaven. As day declined, we sat together watching the red light in the West, but before the setting sun had disappeared, a great black cloud almost suddenly hid it from our sight and soon overspread a great extent along the horizon, and when night came with seemingly ominous haste, not a solitary star could be seen in the cheerless sky, and when I turned to look upon the pale face near me, my heart became inexpressibly sad.

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CHAPTER XIV.

SHALL WE MEET AGAIN?

How easy it is for the comfortable Christian who knows nothing of the pangs of poverty, the sorrows of the afflicted, or the trials of the tempted, to talk of submission to the Divine Will, and to preach contentment to those perplexed by withering care and surrounded by a host of difficulties which seem insurmountable! I care not who the man may be, Christian or Pagan, his heart must be greatly affected by such circumstances; and if his religion be then potent for good, it may be only sufficiently so to save him from that black despair which has led many, not under some restraint of the kind, to be overwhelmed and ready to seek self-destruction. Religion in any form will not bring exemption from human suffering. Faith, no matter how powerful, cannot insure us against sorrow, or enable us to rise superior to human feelings. Nature is inexorable in its demands; to these we must inevitably submit. There is but one release—human impulses can only be quenched by death. No prayer, no tear of repentance, no strong faith, no reliance on Providence, can bring immunity from tribulation. The great Exemplar of Christians was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." How, therefore, can we escape? The only antidote against affliction is the grave.

I had been absent from the mining district scarcely a week, yet what a week of doubt and uncertainty! I tried to hope that she for whom I was so much concerned would get better; the bare idea of seeing her

gradually fade away and leave me was most distressing. None can ever know how truly I loved one, who, surrounded by so many harassing difficulties, had shown such a nobleness of spirit, and had proved herself such a heroine! I would not have left her during her low and feeble condition to the care of others could I possibly have remained, but as I had several appointments which could not easily be neglected, and certain parties to meet who must not if possible be disappointed, I found myself placed in a situation the most trying. Parting with her as I did so reluctantly, for I knew she required every possible care, I had the assurance of tried friends that she should have every attention, and though I had not the least doubt of this, yet I considered that it was my duty to be near at hand instead of being miles away perhaps at a moment of her greatest need.

A full week had now however passed since I last saw her, and I was determined to return and remain with her until there was some satisfactory improvement in her condition. I had made arrangements for the purpose, and was getting things ready so as to be able to leave the next morning, when a messenger arrived all the way from Mrs. Edgar's to tell me that she had been taken suddenly worse, and that if I wished to see her alive I must make all haste to the district.

Such a message, though not altogether unexpected, almost quite unnerved me. I made a hurried preparation, and it was nearly sunset when I started off. I had some miles to ride, and every mile seemed then to be more than a league. I went alone, for the tired messenger who had travelled constantly all the way on foot, had to rest; but even were he with me, and mounted as I was, he could hardly keep up with the pace with which I hastened. I urged my horse to his utmost speed, and in my eagerness to get on I thought he never before had made way so slowly.

as most distressing. I loved one, who, surrounded by such difficulties, had shown herself such a devoted and certain party. During her low state, others could I possibly have appointments, and certain parties. I was disappointed, I was on the most trying. Finally, for I knew she needed the assurance of every attention, and I was not of this, yet I could not appear at hand instead of her great-

passed since I last saw her, and remain with a story of improvement in her engagements for the purpose so as to be able to have a messenger arrive all the time that she had been in the district. I wished to see her.

Together unexpected, I made a hurried preparation and I started off. I had seemed then to be alone, for the tired messenger all the way on foot, with me, and mounted as with the pace with my horse to his utmost get on I thought he slowly.

It soon grew quite dark, and the darkness brought melancholy reflections. The road at the best of times was rough and winding, intersected by others just as rough which led in different directions, and I had therefore most reluctantly to allow the horse to guide himself, and when after tedious hours I got at last to the hill-top where I usually took my survey of the lonely dwelling which I was at this late hour about to enter, a strange sadness came over me; all was still save the wandering night wind which now seemed to rush with mournful sound from the distant hills; heavy clouds were massed overhead; no star appeared in the black sky, and all around seemed dreary and disconsolate. I halted here for a few moments to look toward the house. What a change! No friendly voice met my ear, no child's laugh was heard in the distance. The very air oppressed me with its solemnity, and I felt like one suddenly bereft of every friend and deprived of human sympathy. Still looking forward in the old direction, I knew by the feeble light which glimmered from one of the windows that some kind watcher was by the bedside of the stricken one, and I had a sad impression at the moment that the little ray which made the surrounding gloom more desolate and depressing, was significant, and might be compared by some to the lingering soul or vitality, then perhaps about to leave the frail tenement it had long inhabited to be swallowed up in the interminable night of eternity.

I dismounted a short distance from the house so that no sound of my arrival should reach the ear of any. I led the animal to the little shed where I usually left him, and there I found Simon Blair. In a few sad words he gave me to understand that he thought all would soon be over. After this other friends came and merely shook my hand in silence, as if afraid to speak on the distressing subject.

With sinking heart I stole into the apartment where all I loved most tenderly lay languishing now in the silence of midnight. An old woman sat near the window. Little May, partly dressed, lay asleep on the bed; the attenuated hand of her mother, who appeared to be in a kind of doze, was hidden in the brown hair of the child; but in the wonderfully calm face of the tender parent there seemed to be already stealing the solemn shadow of death.

Oh! what were my feelings at the moment! The only being who I felt could make my existence a special blessing was soon to be claimed by another, and I was to be left to pursue the remainder of my solitary journey alone. I had now in a manner lost all hope. In my almost desponding condition I felt the need of some supernatural support, and, kneeling by the bedside, I looked up to Heaven with clasped hands and compressed lips unable to utter a single word. My silent tears came; only these mute messengers could convey my travail of soul at the time, and God in his pity, I thought, must have seen them; for while with upturned eyes I still sought for compassion, I heard a voice, an angel's voice, the calm, low, sweet, veritable voice as of one of the redeemed, and a light seemed to shine, a soft glow, alike to that which one would imagine could only come from the halo of the celestial throne, now beamed from the eyes which now looked, Oh! how tenderly on me! She raised herself a little, and slowly reaching out her hand until it rested on my head, she softly uttered:—

“May the peace of God which passeth all understanding rest and abide with you forever! Oh! Henry, this is my salutation; it will soon do for our parting. How glad I am that you are with me now! God be praised! God be praised! Praise God! praise God!”

My tears dropped fast, I could not yet reply, but she

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gently took my hand, and looking into my face with an angelic smile, she continued in a low voice, scarcely above a whisper:—

"He will put away all tears. You will not be alone. He will be your comforter—your comforter—when I am gone. I shall leave you for a little while, but we shall meet—we shall meet again!"

I now made an effort to speak. "Oh! Mary, can you not remain? Must you leave me alone, alone, in this cold world?"

I could say no more, my voice failed, and tears streamed down my cheeks. Her gaze was fixed on my face with a pitying look, and a tear gathered in her eye as if it were the last pearly drop drained from her cup of grief. Seeing this I strove to look reconciled and tried to smile in return. Now was the time to show the fortitude which religion gives, but, alas! in this moment of heavy trial—almost of despair—it was to me of little help; it was frail as a reed shaken in the wind, and gave me no positive support. If our light afflictions are but for a moment, they are, while they last, afflictions many of them by no means "light," but altogether beyond the control of that adventitious aid which the excitedly pious and the ascetic tell us we may expect in seasons of anguish and bereavement. There is a kind of relief in prayer; there is a vague feeling of comfort in hope—the hope to meet again in another and a better world—that is all; and in this expectation we must eventually rest content and look no further.

"If I have any regrets now," said she, in a low, weak voice, "it is that alone of leaving my poor child and yourself; but I leave her to God and to you. I know you will accept the charge and do for her as if she were your own. You will be a father and protector to the orphan."

I gave her every assurance, if such were needed, that

I should watch over little May and care for her as long as I had life. She seemed greatly comforted, and told me how supremely happy she was. She would soon be among the redeemed, where there would be no more sorrow and no more parting. And then she repeated some verses from the Book of Revelations, which she always held in high regard:—

"Behold! he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; even so, Amen!" "Fear not, I am the first and the last; he that liveth and was dead, and behold! I am alive forevermore, Amen! and I have the keys of hell and death."—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—"And I will give him the morning star." She appeared to take great delight in these promises, and to be able to repeat every verse of Revelations; a book of the Scriptures which has often afforded such comfort to dying saints, but, strange to say, the genuineness of which was doubted, and is still doubted by so many celebrated Christian men, among whom were even Luther, and Calvin, and other great reformers.

After a pause she repeated the description, as given by John in Patmos, of the throne set in heaven with the rainbow around it, "in sight like unto an emerald," the one that sat thereupon being to look upon "like a jasper and a sardine stone;" and of the "lightnings and thunderings and voices" which proceedeth out of the throne of the "Son of man," whose "head and hairs were white like wool," whose eyes were "as a flame of fire," whose feet "were like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace," whose voice was "as the sound of many waters," and "out of whose mouth went a sharp two-

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edged sword;" of the "seven lamps—the seven spirits
of God" burning before the throne; of the "sea of glass
like unto crystal;" of the four and twenty elders clothed
in white raiment, having harps, and upon their heads
"crowns of gold," which were cast before the throne
when the elders fell down to worship the Lamb, which
had "seven horns and seven eyes;" and of how the
souls of those that were slain for the word of God and
for the testimony which they held, cried with a loud
voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou
not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on
the earth?" and then, when the final time came, how the
flying angel proclaimed, "O woe" to the inhabitants
of the earth, the sun becoming "black," the moon as
"blood," the stars of heaven "falling," the heaven
departing as "a scroll when it is rolled together," every
mountain and island "moved out of their places;" and
of how the wicked by implication—"the kings of the
earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the
chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-
man and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and
in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the moun-
tains and rocks: "Fall on us and hide us from the face
of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath
of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and
who shall be able to stand?"

How unaccountable it would seem, that while the
pious Christian can read with delight the tender and
affectionate promises of God to his waiting saints, he
can apparently approve of a demand for vengeance, and
look with satisfaction, even to exultation, on the
condition of those who finally condemned rush to try
and hide themselves in dens and rocks "from the wrath
of the Lamb!"

After this she gave a description of the holy city "of
pure gold," the New Jerusalem, with its foundations of

precious stones, and its great wall of jasper, which came down from God out of heaven; with its twelve pearly gates, each gate being a single pearl, and its streets of "pure gold" transparent as glass; the beautiful city of God which had "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it"—"for there shall be no night there;" "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

The mysterious narrative of John the Divine is even to this day a source of perplexity to many of our most learned and ingenuous commentators. The humble believer relying, however, on this as the latest revelation from God, readily accepts it, and adds a spiritual significance to the alleged incongruous and materialistic description given in the Apocalyptic visions; tracing in each character or scene some prophetic, figurative, or emblematic resemblance which enhances his pious satisfaction, while those of "little faith," wander, as it were, in a mist, and are harassed by doubts bordering nearly on total unbelief.

Midnight had passed and she slept again, a kind of deep sleep as if it were the prelude to that eternal rest which was soon to follow. What a dread repose she had now! While in this state the weather changed, the rain fell heavily, and the night-blast blew the drops against the window panes, making my situation still more melancholy. I tried to think, but my thoughts were fragmentary on any other subject than the sorrowful one which now so much depressed me. I had to think of her who I was now convinced was shortly—perhaps within an hour—to leave me forever. There she lay, with her poor, pale, and worn face, her troubles, trials and persecution almost ended; her thin hand still resting on the head of her child. List!—she now mutters—is it a dream? She is at home again among the friends of her youth. She smiles, and with words of tenderest af-

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fection greets once more her father and mother! In
fancy her care seems to be forgotten, and her wearying
anguish to have passed away. In her wonted innocence
she addresses her brother, and is evidently delighted
with his fancied reply. How happy she seems!—the
loved ones have come back, and she is with them again.
Thank God, for even this short return of earthly felicity
ere she leaves a world which has been so cold and un-
kind, for that land of pure delight, where the wicked
cease from troubling and where the weary are at rest.
Praise God for the momentary forgetfulness of her great
wrongs!

List again! The wind raises its mournful voice, and
with increased violence dashes the rain against the win-
dows which rattle at every rush of the wild blast. List!
she tries to sing; she hears the wind, and perhaps fan-
cies it is the heavenly choir, or happily thinks it is
some greeting voice from the dim shore which she is
approaching; and now she speaks. "Hear those sweet
voices; they call—they call, and bid me to come. Look!
how beautiful they are; they await, and I must away!"
She opens her eyes for a moment, and closes them again,
as if to prolong the mental gaze of the ecstatic vision,
and another apparently blissful slumber follows. An-
other hour has passed, one evidently of felicity to her,
for her smile remains, and her lips occasionally mutter
words of happiness and faint expressions of the greatest
pleasure. How grateful I feel for this! yet it cannot
last long, for her poor worn body seems to be giving
way, her prostrate form is unable to withstand the men-
tal reaction; even the fancied return of earthly happi-
ness is too much for the frail tenement.

The rain has ceased, and it is calm again, but there is
an approaching gloom which may remain forever. The
shadows of death now hurry around her, and gather
thick upon her worn features. Yet no shadow of the

King of Terrors can hide the heavenly smile which lights her face, and no frown of the Destroyer can chase away the calm expression of triumph which has settled on her countenance. Her eyes open again. What a light seems to be in her transient gaze! She looks at her child, and then at me, and while she feebly presses my hand, I turn aside from the pitiful sight, almost overcome, and look up to heaven. The sky is clear, where I view, as if there was an opening in the firmament to admit a pure spirit to Paradise. A lone bright star now appears, as if some celestial messenger was in waiting to conduct her home. I sought her face again, and she noticed my parting look with the same smile. Her lips moved; I could just hear her mutter the words, "Praise God!" I saw her look up at the star, and then letting her wearied lids close, my earthly angel left me to join, I would fain hope, the sanctified host in heaven.

She is gone! Her life and death did more to humanize the neglected people of that dreary district than all the prayers or preaching they had ever heard. A day or two before she died, she requested that her body should not be taken away, but left among the poor and almost despised class whom she had tried to serve; the only beings who since her great trouble had ever been truly and disinterestedly kind to her. In a retired spot, on the slope of one of the distant hills, she still lies. Her grave is shaded by willows planted by Simon Blair. A little moss-covered head-stone tells her name; and year after year, as we have made a pilgrimage to that sacred place, the fresh flowers to be seen about the lonely mound were a feeling evidence that her memory was cherished by those who were once supposed to be without gratitude or human hearts.

Fifteen years have passed since that grave was closed on the hill-side hiding forever from my sight one of the most true, gentle, and submissive beings that ever enno-

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 willows. Ere the fourth spring-time passed from the
 period of her mother's death, little May was taken like
 a rare flower from my garden to be placed beside those
 covering her parent's resting place. There they still lie
 side by side. In death they are not divided. Many an
 eye has been thoughtfully turned toward heaven from
 that sacred spot; many a stern heart has there been
 softened, and many a stubborn spirit humbled while
 dwelling on the patient sufferings of one whose life was
 spent in making self-sacrifices for others; and many a
 sigh has there been heaved from feeling that the voice
 which once gave such gentle admonitions is now silent
 forever. But hushed though it be, her memory yet
 lives and awakes solemn thoughts which cannot be
 resisted by the most careless. And in quiet hours those
 who visit the graves in that unconsecrated ground feel
 that the place is holy, and are pressed to serious reflec-
 tion, and led to consider the shortness of human life,
 and to feel that—"As for man his days are as grass; as
 a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind pass-
 eth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall
 know it no more."*

* The main incidents of this story are founded on fact.

CHAPTER XV.

DREAMS AND WITCHES.

How the years have bounded by! To me their stay now appears shorter and their flight more rapid. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter, come and pass away in quick succession, as if in the downhill of life their speed have been accelerated. I feel that I am becoming aged, and I sometimes look around like one in search of others only to see vacant places, and find many absent who are never to return. How uncertain is the duration of human existence! Life, however, has its wonderful lessons, and it is interesting to look back and recall the phases of character, and the variety of disposition which once gave impulse to different individuals. While thinking of these it seems as if one were looking at pictures of the forms and faces of those who have departed; and, while studying such portraiture, I am often reminded of the fallibility of some of those whom the world admits to have been eminent. An impartial scrutiny would make many a reputed just man blush for his short comings.

Having spent most of my time among religious people, many of whom were said to be remarkably pious, I have noticed much relating to them that another person might have overlooked; and to while away many an hour, I have made little records of matters and things concerning preachers and hearers, which go to prove that notwithstanding the usual professions of many who claim to have been converted, their love of the world is still strong; their prejudices still active, their bigotry

Intense, their credulity amazing, and even their scepticism astonishing. As some of my entries may appear paradoxical, I shall here state that I shall be particular with details, and shall set nothing down which has not come under my observation, or which has not to the best of my knowledge been founded on fact.

As I have before stated, it is a great mistake to suppose that the godly are any more free from trials and temptations than others. I have had singular exemplifications of how restless, how dissatisfied, how envious, how malicious, how desponding, and how unbelieving, are numbers who are not only prominent Christians—enrolled members of the church—some of whom have been ordained expounders of the Gospel itself. I shall not try to illustrate this by giving evidence in an order corresponding to the characteristics noted. I shall commence with those whose failings or peculiarities strike me at present most forcibly.

"I have spent a restless night and have had a singular dream, one that impresses me strangely. I fear I shall be good for nothing the next twenty-four hours."

These were the first words addressed to me by the Superintendent of our circuit as he made his appearance after breakfast on the morning after our arrival at a town in the north of England. A missionary meeting was to be held there that night, and he said he was doubtful of being able to make the address, or rather the appeal, expected from him on that occasion.

"Tut!" said I in reply, "what's in a dream? Nothing. A heavy supper has given birth to many a phantom. You were hungry after your long ride yesterday, and probably ate more than usual. Take a rest for an hour or so on that sofa while I read you the report left by the Secretary; this will enable you to collect your thoughts, and you will be all right."

"You seem to think there is nothing in dreams," said

he, stretching himself on the sofa. "Well, 'tis strange that so many religious people should be doubtful on the subject. Impressive dreams should be considered revelations; they were so considered in former times. Do we not read of Joseph's dream and of Pharaoh's?—of how God came to Abimelech, to Jacob, to Laban, and to Solomon in a dream? And later, in the New Testament, were not Joseph and Mary warned in a dream? Did not Pilate's wife feel troubled by her dream? And are we not told in Acts that in the last days that young men shall see visions, and that old men shall dream dreams? And yet half-fledged sceptics in the church, as well as out of it, tell us to place no reliance on what may be the Providential warnings of the night season. I believe in dreams as firmly as I believe in the Bible. There is nothing in that sacred book, no matter how far beyond my comprehension, that I do not accept as truth."

"I admit," I replied, "that the Bible has led many to suppose that, in several cases, dreams were intended as revelations from the Deity, but with many others the opinion now prevails that the time for such revelations, as well as for miracles, has passed, their original purpose having it is presumed been accomplished."

"Not at all, not at all," said he, hastily, "God still deals with us in dreams and visions of the night; his plans are unchangeable. Even in mid-day slumber he has lifted the veil to reveal the future, and to prove that dreams may still be relied on. You have heard no doubt of the singular instance of the fulfillment of a dream as recorded in one of our magazines. Brother — arrives at a certain place where he is to preach that evening. Being fatigued, he retires in the heat of the day to a summer-house, and is soon overcome by sleep. While in this condition an eminent preacher with pale face and gloomy countenance appears before him. The sleeper is startled, and upon inquiry is informed by his

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phantom visitor that he had but just left this state of
 existence; that having been too desirous of being held
 high in the estimation of the religious world, he had in
 a manner preached *himself* rather than Christ, and that
 for his impious pride he had been suddenly cut off and
 condemned. The vision disappeared, and the sleeper
 awoke greatly troubled. On his way to the chapel he
 meets some friends who sorrowfully inform him that the
 eminent servant of God, Brother —, had that after-
 noon suddenly expired!* Now what do you think of
 that?"

I replied that I remembered having read of that cir-
 cumstance. "The coincidence as to the death was
 rather remarkable, but," said I, "I dare not believe on
 such evidence, that so distinguished a preacher was
 eternally lost. In fact, in our old magazines, too many
 stories and anecdotes of this character were inserted.
 It was found that these rather encouraged a too ready
 belief in what might now be termed 'old wives'
 fables.' Indeed, you know that even gospel incidents
 have been called such by many of the reputed wise and
 learned of our day. So it was directed, I presume, by
 the publishing committee, that subsequent numbers of
 the Methodist Magazine should omit startling items
 relating to a 'Remarkable Providence,' 'The Provi-
 dence of God Displayed,' 'The Providence of God
 Asserted'; and stories bearing on the unnatural or im-
 probable which caught the attention of certain readers
 more readily than the memoirs, biographies, sermons,
 religious essays, critical explanations or illustrations of
 texts, and missionary intelligence for which the maga-
 zines are now more specially intended."

"Oh! yes," replied he, hastily, "everything relating
 to Providential interferences or remarkable interposi-
 tions, was excluded as rather favoring the idea of

* Such an account appeared in one of the old Arminian or Meth-
 odist magazines.

supernaturalism. Here again they ignored the teaching of the Word of God. Our founder, John Wesley, was not ashamed to avow his belief in special Providences, or even in witches and apparitions, because he had undoubted authority for that belief in Divine Revelation. His journals record his deliberate convictions on these matters. Here is his rebuke to those who affected a disbelief in witches: 'It is true, likewise, that the English in general, and indeed most of the men of Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised, and with such insolence spread throughout the nation, in direct opposition not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible. And they know, on the other hand, that if but one account of the intercourse of men with departed spirits be admitted, their whole castle in the air—Deism, Atheism, Materialism—falls to the ground. I know no reason, therefore, why we should suffer even this weapon to be wrested out of our hands. Indeed, there are numerous arguments besides, which abundantly confute their vain imaginations. But we need not be hooted out of one; neither reason nor religion require this.' "

"And he further said: 'While I live, I will bear the most public testimony I can to the reality of witchcraft. Your denial of this springs originally from the Deists, and simple Christians lick up their spittle'

they ignored the teaching of the founder, John Wesley, who held a special belief in special Providential apparitions, because he held that belief in Divine Providence as his deliberate conclusion. It is his rebuke to those who hold that belief: 'It is true, like the fables of the ancients, and indeed most of the accounts of the old wives' fables. I take this opportunity of saying against this violent combat, that the Bible pay to me. I owe them no such debt. These are at the bottom of the matter, and with such influence, and with such influence, in direct opposition to the suffrage of the ages and nations. They tell us (know it or not) that the effect of giving up the Bible, on the other hand, that if but one man with departed spirits could be seen in the air—Deism, to the ground. I know we should suffer even this in our hands. Indeed, there are besides, which abundantly prove. But we need not be in season nor religion require

While I live, I will bear the witness to the reality of witchcraft, springs originally from the human mind, and lick up their spittle.

And Lecky, in his 'Rationalism in Europe,' tells us that in 1773 'the divines of the Associated Presbytery passed a resolution declaring their belief in witchcraft and deploring the scepticism that was general.' Witchcraft has been denounced far and wide even by ordained theologians, and proclaimed a superstition. What presumption! Is it not recognized in the Bible as an existing evil, as an 'abomination to the Lord'? And because some of his believing servants felt it to be their duty—no doubt a painful one—to obey the divine command, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!' they are to this day—yes, and from some of our pulpits—denounced as fierce fanatics and persecutors. Why deny what God himself admits? Kings and prophets of old believed in the occult faculty. Did not Saul consult the witch at Endor, and is not the record plain that she had power to raise the dead Samuel? And Samuel, we are told, actually appeared 'as an old man—covered with a mantle,' who addressed Saul audibly, 'Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?' Thus we have it in the sacred text, and yet we find presumptuous doubters among the learned clergy who try to explain away this noted transaction, as if ashamed of its unreliability. But Bishop Horne, the commentator, was one who like Wesley was not afraid to accept the Bible statement and avow his belief in this matter. Let me just read you part of his comment. The learned Bishop writes: 'Respecting the transaction at Endor, the case in a few words stands thus: Convinced by proper evidence of the authority of the book in which it is related, we of course believe that the several incidents happened as they are there said to have happened. By what power or agency they were brought about, or how the business was conducted, is another question which is confessedly to us at this distance of time of an obscure or difficult nature.' No doubt his

reason had perhaps made an effort to rebel against a belief in the transaction, but finding it prominently in the Divine account, he like a true Christian submitted and believed. In the New Testament we have also a reference to the existence of witchcraft, and we are therefore justified in assuming that it is practiced even at the present time."

Of course I had to admit that the Bible record concerning witchcraft, and its illustration by the sorceress at Endor, must or rather would be accepted by every true believer. In ancient times the practice of magic, demonology, and astrology, was prevalent in almost all countries, but in modern days, though there has scarcely been a satisfactory proof that witchcraft has been resorted to for any purpose, yet what horrid cruelties have followed from the continued belief in the black art! and pious communities combined, as a bounden duty, to hunt, discover, and persecute even unto death, all who should be accused of dealing with demoniacal powers for the injury of others. By means of professional "witch-finders," thousands of poor defenceless creatures in Germany, France, England, and other countries, were most inhumanly treated. No pleading could save; to be accused was simply sufficient, and, as a general rule, speedy condemnation followed and the victim was given to the flames. Too often the most helpless and innocent—old women and children—were the first to be charged with the terrible offence. No old woman was able to disprove that she had caused a storm or tempest, that she had brought sickness to some member of a family, or caused a cow to withhold her milk. After an accusation was laid, the law was unmerciful. General terror prevailed, for no one could tell who was the next that might be accused. All classes seemed to have been affected by the delusion. Even Sir Matthew Hale, the pious and eminent

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judge, tried and condemned two women for bewitching children, and the unfortunate culprits suffered a cruel death in consequence.

During the long Parliament in England it is said that three thousand persons charged with witchcraft were executed; and as late as 1722 an old woman in Scotland was charged with the alleged crime, and met the fate of others. Even as recently as 1863, a reported wizard was seized by a number of persons and drowned in a pond at the village of Hedingham, in Essex, England. All classes, Kings, Popes, and clergy, believed at one time in the certainty of witchcraft. Martin Luther was inhuman enough to say, "I should have no compassion on these witches, I would burn them all." James VI., of Scotland, made "numerous official investigations into alleged cases of witchcraft," and he afterwards published a book on demonology. Eminent clergymen, such as Dr. Joseph Glanvil, chaplain in ordinary to Charles II., and the Rev. Richard Baxter, author of the "Saints' Everlasting Rest," wrote learned works upholding a belief in witchcraft. Sir George Mackenzie, Lord Advocate of Scotland, firmly believed in it; and Sir Thomas More declared that to give up witchcraft was to throw away the sacred Scriptures. Judged by such a test, how many in those days may be said to have repudiated God's Word! Using such a test, where should we now find true believers?

Then the New World, America, became tainted with the prevalent belief, and in New England the frenzy against witchcraft became exceedingly intense. There, as in other places, the clergy were the prime movers in this particular form of persecution. The Rev. Cotton Mather, who was considered a prodigy of piety and learning, and the Rev. Samuel Parris, of Salem, another pious celebrity, were most fierce and unrelenting against all charged with witchcraft, and their unmerciful deal-

ings with those accused of this offence were really shocking. Indeed the cruelties against witchcraft became so terrible, that after awhile public feeling revolted against their continuation; the numerous legal murders became no longer endurable, and finally the delusion was broken. Much as has been recorded concerning the ferocities caused by the superstitions of earlier times, those which followed the persecutions of witchcraft will forever be among the darkest spots marked by human credulity.

Must we still persecute? There are yet some of firm belief in the Divine Word, who think that the command—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," should still be obeyed as the command of God—a command as peremptory as ever, and who, were it not for the more humane public opinion which now happily prevails, would go forth and accuse, and condemn, and torture, and destroy, as of old, and as still followed in many of the dark places of the earth. Must we still persecute for opinions? No! I trust the day has forever passed when any man can be punished for his honest convictions. Must I have no fellowship with him who conscientiously differs from my view of doctrines at a time when Reason is asserting its pre-eminence as the grand arbiter in all things? Intolerance however exists. The race of persecutors are not yet extinct. There are some, even among the pious, who are so bitter against hostile opinions, that though they cannot now torture the body of him who is heterodox, they will use unscrupulous means to ruin his reputation. There is no true religion in this.

"I said that I believed in witchcraft," continued my friend; "I also believe in apparitions. Here, again, we have in the Bible our foundation for such a conviction. Snatterers in theology, those who wish to be wise above what is written, scientific nincompoops, and petty philosophers feel themselves too intellectual to give credence to the appearance of spirits. In a qualified way

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they may admit, when closely pressed, that departed
ones have occasionally returned; still they admit this
reluctantly, and will give various explanations to try to
prove that, after all, those who claim to have seen appa-
ritions were in most cases deceived by illusions caused
perhaps by illness or defective vision. But," asked he,
"is not the belief in such appearances very general?"

I had of course to admit that such was the case.

"Yes," continued he, "in ancient as well as in mod-
ern times the wisest have borne testimony that ghostly
visitations are common, and all history, sacred and pro-
fane, bears evidence that among the rudest as well as
among the most enlightened; among Pagans as well as
among Christians, few ventured to doubt that the dead
had power to return and did return, revisiting again the
glimpses of the moon."

"I know," said I, "that our founder, John Wesley,
had scarcely a doubt on the subject."

"Scarcely a doubt!" interrupted he, "read his jour-
nals again, and you will be convinced that instead of
doubt, it was to him a certainty. But let us go to an
authority that cannot be gainsaid. Do we not read in
the Bible that at the time of the crucifixion 'the graves
were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept
arose, and came out of the graves after his crucifixion
and appeared unto many.' Ought not this to be proof
sufficient?"

I hesitated before I made a reply, because it is well
known that prodigies similar to this were said to have
taken place upon the death of great men long previous
to the time of Christ. Virgil records the tradition, that
a short time before the death of Cæsar, the dead arose
and were seen; and Shakespeare embodies the same
idea in the play of Hamlet when he tells us that—

"In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."

—[Act i., Scene 1.

Cæsar, it is well known, was born one hundred years before the Christian era, and he died many years anterior to the advent of Christ. I was therefore undecided as to what I should say; for I am one of those that privately venture to doubt the validity of certain texts; and with regard to the passage in Matthew, I have thought it might be an interpolation, like some others in the Scriptures, and it some way engendered a spirit of incredulity. At last, I merely replied that the account, if correct, ought to be a sufficient proof.

"Who would dare to question its correctness?" cried he hastily. "You would not. No Christian man can hesitate to accept the relation as truth. When the disciples about the fourth watch of the night saw Jesus walking upon the sea, did they not fear that it was a spirit, and cry out? And when he stood in the midst of them after his crucifixion, we read that they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. Many other passages in the Divine word record the fact that the appearance of spirits was common, and it is evident that such a belief was general; it is even so to-day."

"I admit," said I, "that most persons still believe in supernatural appearances. I would not be so presumptuous as to say that there have not been or cannot be such, but incredulity respecting them is greatly on the increase. Many will tell you that they have been told of so and so having heard or seen something ghostly or unearthly, but I have never yet met a man who could honestly say that he had a satisfactory personal knowledge of anything of the kind himself. Now, Brother," asked I, "have you?"

"I cannot say that I have," he replied after a pause.

"Well, now," I continued, "there are hundreds like you who will tell us that we must have no misgivings as to the visitations of spirits, even at the present day, who

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have never yet had ocular demonstration of anything
of the kind."

"Stay! stay!" said he, emphasizing as it were, with
his hand raised, "have you ever seen the Pyramids?"
'No."

"Then see the weakness of your reasoning," contin-
ued he with an air of triumph, "would you deny that
they exist because you have never seen them?"

"Ah! but that is not a fair mode of deduction," I
replied, "for you know that it is possible to get a thou-
sand persons quite reliable who will tell us that they
have seen the Pyramids, and we feel certain that within
a given time we could go and see them ourselves, but it
would be very difficult, if not impossible, for you to find
a man who will say that while in sound health of body
and mind he had seen a spirit, nor dare you venture to
say that were I to take a whole year in the search I
could meet with an apparition, or discover the shadowy
outlines of a ghost."

After thinking for a minute or two, he asked, "Now
as you seem to be very incredulous, would you take the
trouble to satisfy yourself on this point? Would you, for
instance, go to where it might be possible for you to
witness a supernatural appearance?"

"Would I? certainly," said I, replying to his question
at once. "I should consider it a duty to go any reason-
able distance to obtain positive proof that the dead have
power to return."

"Then if your resolution does not fail you," he con-
tinued, "I think it quite probable that you will have
sufficient evidence to satisfy you in this matter. You
have heard, I suppose, of the old meeting-house?"

"Of course I have," I answered. "It is scarcely
twelve miles from here."

"The same," he replied. "Have you ever heard
anything concerning it?"

I thought for a while and answered, "Only a vague rumor that it was haunted."

"There's more than a rumor in the matter," he continued. "Many years ago the man and his wife who had charge of the place were murdered. Some heartless wretches broke into the house at night for the purpose of plunder. They had heard that an amount of money, with some valuables, had been left there. The inmates resisted and lost their lives. You have no doubt heard of the sad story?"

I told him I had.

"Even long before that," said he, "the place had a bad name, and if you make inquiries, I think you will find that too much has not been said. To be plain, I have heard from an undoubted source that people have been so terrified there at night by dreadful sounds and sights, that it is with difficulty any one can be got to take charge of the house; for years I understand it has been without a paying tenant. Now if you can pluck up courage enough to spend one night under the roof, if you are not convinced before day-dawn that there are supernatural visitors to be seen within its old walls, I shall be greatly disappointed."

"As you say that you have never seen an apparition, if you are so certain that I shall see one there, would it not," I asked, "be well for us both to go and spend a night there together? You know that fear is sometimes sufficient to conjure up some spectre or goblin and lead one to be deceived. Now, if we should go there and sit and read, or converse side by side during the solemn hours, when it is said that the departed ones are most likely to make themselves visible, I am someway of the opinion that we shall not be troubled; anyway, if we saw anything of a ghostly character we should probably be more convinced as to its reality."

"Oh! no need of my going there," replied he,

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e seen within its old walls, I
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elved. Now, if we should go
r converse side by side during
it is said that the departed
make themselves visible, I am
that we shall not be troubled;
ing of a ghostly character we
convinced as to its reality."
my going there," replied he,

hastily, "I believe already, and I want nothing further
to strengthen my convictions."

As I found that my friend, like many others, had
established a belief upon the merest hearsay or tradi-
tion, and not upon any legitimate evidence, and that
like a thousand others he was content with partial in-
formation on so important a subject, I felt that from
his positive, self-satisfied manner, it would be useless
to press him to make any closer inquiries, or to try and
discover a deception.

"Well," said I, "whether you come or not, I shall
take the earliest opportunity of going to this deserted
mansion, and if I should receive a visit from any one
from that bourne from which it is said no traveller
returns, you may rely on it that the information which
I shall give shall not be fed by fancy or colored by
exaggeration."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

It was more than a month after this before I found it
convenient to make the promised excursion. I had
fully made up my mind to go to the old meeting-house,
and I was determined when there to see all that was
possible to discover of the spirits either good or evil
that were said to disturb the old building. One might
be misled by the name given to the place. The old
meeting-house was not one of our places of worship—
then called, by the State clergy and their followers,
"conventicles," like other dissenting chapels. It had
formerly been used for some purpose by the Society of
Friends, or Quakers, and had derived its present name

from that circumstance. Long previous to this it had been occupied as an inn, afterwards as a kind of county poor-house, and subsequently for other purposes. When the Society of Friends got possession, they put it in good repair and kept it for many years until the house was broken into and plundered, and the persons in charge of the place murdered; and after this the rumor was more general that the old meeting-house was haunted.

In England, as in other countries, it is rather common to hear of certain spots that are haunted. Graveyards, prisons, places of execution, old castles, old ruins, and old mansions here and there, are said to be the resorts of troubled spirits who leave their prison-house to reveal some dread secret, to make or claim restitution, to convey some solemn warning, or, it may be, to find a long-sought revenge; and terrible tales concerning these spectres are told at the fireside on winter nights, leaving children, and even some old people, almost afraid of their shadows, or afraid of going to bed in the dark.

Independent of any other motive, I had a good excuse to make an excursion to the meeting-house. A friend of mine wished to open a little seminary in a healthy locality. He did not want a large building; his means were limited; and, from what he had heard of the old domicile, apart from its strange associations, he was of the opinion that it would answer his purpose, the rent being merely nominal. It was his intention to accompany me. He had but little faith in ghosts, and was quite ready to meet them face to face, if need be, but sickness in his family prevented his leaving home at the time, so I had to go alone.

The little village of Roblin is situated in a pleasant valley. It has hills to the north and east, and a stream, sufficiently wide in some parts to entitle it to be almost

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called a river, winds gently through neighboring mea-
dows, merely touching the southern outskirts of the
town, and then moving in its languid course towards
the sea, a few miles distant. Leaving the town you
cross the stream over an old stone bridge, whose one
wide moss-covered arch casts, particularly during a
bright sunset, a very marked and well-defined shadow
of itself in the clear water, almost every stone being
distinctly seen, and at such a time the longer shadows
of the tall trees standing here and there along the
banks can be seen stretched along the burnished sur-
face of the stream, forming a most agreeable contrast
of light and shade.

In consequence of the unexpected delay I had met
with, it was late in December when I got to the inn
where I proposed to rest and make inquiries in relation
to the meeting-house, and I was, on the whole, rather
pleased when I found it was Christmas Eve; for it is said
that ghosts are more at liberty to appear about that time
than at any other; and, if it were possible for one to be
seen, I really wished to make its acquaintance. The
next day would be the 25th. I should therefore have
plenty of time to see the place at my leisure, to hear all
that could be told concerning its dark history, to stop
all night if opportunity offered, and return home to
partake of my Christmas dinner.

"It's a rum corner, that!" said the landlord of the
little inn of whom I made an inquiry. Taking his long
clay pipe from his mouth, and pointing with it signifi-
cantly, he remarked in a low tone of voice, "I wouldna
tak a hoondred poond an' stop yan night by mysen in
yonder cooper chaamber."

The house indicated by the landlord was nearly a
mile distant from the other side of the bridge. It stood
on high ground, and the sunlight flashed from its upper
windows, leaving it to look anything but gloomy, and

most unlike a locality to be frequented by restless or unhappy spirits. I found the landlord very communicative. He was a stout, good-natured looking man, rather shrewd in appearance, and one who, I thought, would not be very credulous or easily imposed on by idle stories relating to ghosts or fairies; still he seemed to have a strong belief in all that was said or told about the noises or appearances in the meeting-house. I asked him how long the place was said to be haunted.

"More'en a hoondred years!" he replied. His father and his grandfather—aye, and his great-grandfather!—had known all about it. "And," said he, "the bishops and parsons, an' others oot loike about here, has gone an' prayed yonner; but, dang it, all the good they did was to mak' matters woorse an' woorse, so they gav' it oop."

I asked if every one in the neighborhood believed as he did.

"Yeas, bleevd it!" said he, rather contemptuously, "Why, ye moight a heerd on't all oover t'kingdoom. Whoy, they cooms here frae all parts to see t' and hoose; sometimes one or two or three of a week."

One matter was made plain during my conversation with the landlord, and it was, that he made a very good thing out of this rumor concerning the haunted building. Nearly all who came to see the old meeting-house stopped at his inn, and at times made his business very brisk indeed; and it struck me that he was just such a man who, under the circumstances, would rather encourage the delusion, if such it were, than do otherwise.

Assuming to be rather surprised at what he told me, I learned from him that the old house was owned by some rich man in London, who could get no person either to purchase or rent it. The house was partly furnished and was now in charge of a man who lived

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close by, and who cultivated the four acres belonging to the property, being also allowed the proceeds of the garden and the orchard, which were included. Of late years no one could be got to stop a night in the house for any consideration. One after another used to come occasionally to see about renting the place, but for a long time past there had been no applicant, and the landlord said he thought there would scarcely be another.

"Do you think that I could see the premises?" I asked, in a careless manner. "I should like to get into the house, though I would not care to go into it just alone, you know."

The landlord looked sharply at me for a moment, as if in doubt of my seeming timidity, or perhaps of my sanity, and replied—

"Oh! yes, they lets 'em in and will show folks all through for maybe sixpence or a shilling each, but it maun be afore soonset. Neither Harry Gaines nor his wife would tak' fifty poond an' go in there after dark."

"Well, I'd like to see the place, and as I am rather curious in my way, if I wished to stay there after dark, or even all night, I suppose there is nothing to prevent it?"

"Nothing, I s'pose," said he, after having given me another scrutinizing look. "Nothing! but, dang it, friend, you wouldn't think o' stopping in such a hell-hole as that for a single hour alone against twolight, mooch less for a whole night? No, not for the King's crown would I stay! Ye moost a heeard o' a man who once tried that, an' who was taken next day crazy to t'sylum? Na, na! iv ye gan there for a bit, coom back here in toime an' hae a good night's rest, which no mortal being can hae yonder!"

I told him I would go over there any way; it would be a pleasant walk, and that after looking around, if I

thought there was likely to be any disturbance, I should return at a proper hour. I did not intend, I said, to be reckless of consequences.

It was now about the middle of the afternoon. I drew out my watch to see the time, and then, while glancing over a newspaper, the landlord left the room, and following him with my eyes, I saw him whisper to a boy in the next apartment. He was a smart, cunning-looking little fellow, and in less than a minute he started off, followed by a large Newfoundland dog. From the window I saw him scamper across the bridge, and make his way apparently in the direction of the meeting-house. The landlord seemed desirous of engaging me in conversation. He gave me further information about the haunted building, told me of the murders said to have been committed there, and gave me a description of some of the apparitions reported to have been seen there at times by others. He evidently wished to dissuade me from remaining there very long, and then he whispered, "Iv ye chance to see a man about wi' a red cap—a chap loike that were once drooned in a deep hole in t'stream whoile a fishin'—don't ye stay there mooch longer or there moight be trooble loike."

Leaving instructions to have my horse well cared for, I started to walk the mile which was to bring me to the haunted region. It was a calm, pleasant evening. The ground was but slightly frozen, and a few icicles could be seen here and there in shaded places. Having crossed the bridge, I took my way along the bank of the stream. It would be somewhat of a roundabout course, but being in no particular hurry to reach the house, I found the walk very exhilarating, and while going on in a kind of musing mood, I had to stop more than once to gaze on the scene which some bend in the stream had made attractive. Scarcely a sound could be heard. The dried withered leaves on which I trod were not disturbed by

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any passing breeze, and the bushes and ferns along the banks were as motionless as the light clouds overhead. Suddenly I heard a dog bark at a distance. I looked around and in a few moments I heard barking again, and turning my eyes down the stream, I observed a boy. I thought it must be the one who had left the inn, crouching behind a large tree which stood perhaps two hundred yards distant, as if hiding from some one. All was quiet once more. I soon forgot the interruption, and I went leisurely on until I came to a point where the path turned up towards the old house. There I stopped again. The stream from this point moved off in another direction, and while watching the crimson light which was now reflected in the placid water, another object caught my attention. A large ancient looking tree, much larger than any other I could notice, stood close to the edge of the stream a considerable distance from me. Its knotted limbs and extended branches were spread far out, casting a wide circular shade which touched the opposite bank. At the base of this big tree the ground was higher than any other spot I had yet observed along the margin. It looked like a mound, and standing on this, but apparently as immovable as a statue, was a man in a dark gray dress, and wearing a red cap. He held what appeared like a fishing-rod over the stream, and his head was bent as if patiently awaiting a fisherman's luck; but though I stood watching him for some minutes, he remained motionless, and never once threw his line. I was rather surprised at this, for being something of a fisherman myself, I knew he could scarcely catch a trout unless he swung his rod; and then it occurred to me that he must be a novice in the art, for it was not a good time of the year for fly-fishing of any kind. Just then another bark, and then another was heard. The sound came from the direction in which the haunted building was situated. I looked

up towards the place, and after, as I thought, but a moment or two, when I turned around again, to my great astonishment the fisherman had disappeared!

I waited there for some time expecting his return. I wondered how he could have made off so quickly. He must, thought I, be seated behind that mound, or perhaps he has rushed into that thicket—there was one close by. He must have had plenty of time to do this, for I had probably kept my eyes in the other direction longer than I fancied. However, though greatly surprised at first at the disappearance of the angler, I thought less and less of the matter, and as I walked up the rising ground towards the house, other ideas occupied my mind, and I almost forgot the circumstance.

In less than a quarter of an hour I stood in front of the condemned habitation. It was much larger than I expected to find it, and it was, notwithstanding its reputed age, a passable looking stone building of two stories. It had four dormer windows in the roof, four other windows below these, and one larger window on each side of the spacious door. Three or four wide stone steps, with rusted iron side-railings, led up to the entrance. The roof was hipped, and two tall chimneys partly covered with ivy rose from the angles. A number of small birds had evidently found refuge here. The ivy had also spread over the slate roof, and covered one end of the house, almost hiding the windows in that part. Several of the window-panes were broken, and the others were so covered with dust and cobwebs that it was with difficulty one could distinguish anything in the interior from the outside. A large oak tree stood at one end of the building, near enough to have some of its large limbs touch the wall. The fence or paling in front was in rather a dilapidated condition; but the piece of land belonging to the property—including the garden and the orchard—was enclosed or bounded by a low

er, as I thought, but a mound round again, to my great surprise disappeared! I was expecting his return. He made off so quickly. He hid behind that mound, or perhaps in the thicket—there was one plenty of time to do this, but he went in the other direction. However, though greatly surprised at the appearance of the angler, I did not utter a word, and as I walked up the house, other ideas occurred. I forgot the circumstance. An hour I stood in front of it, it was much larger than I expected, notwithstanding its rustic stone building of two stories, with windows in the roof, four in all, and one larger window on the front. Three or four wide stone paths, led up to the entrance, and two tall chimneys rose from the angles. A number of people found refuge here. The ivy covered the roof, and covered one end of the windows in that part. The panes were broken, and the dust and cobwebs that it collected distinguished anything in the place. A large oak tree stood at one end, enough to have some of its branches over the fence or paling in front of the building; but the piece of ground—property—including the garden was enclosed or bounded by a low

stone wall still in sufficient repair to keep out swine or wandering cattle. Taking it all in all there was nothing, at least in the outside look of the place, or of its surroundings, so far as I could see, to lead any one to imagine that it was a suitable, sombre, or gloomy spot for any kind of spiritual or supernatural revelry.

"A fine evening, Sir," said a man addressing me. There was a thatched cottage at a short distance, and he had approached me from that place. Previous to this, while I was viewing the old house, I noticed him watching me as I thought rather sharply. I also saw a woman, I supposed his wife, standing inside the door, and, if I was not mistaken, the same boy that ran on before me from the inn, was a little way behind her; but I saw nothing of the large black dog which had followed him.

"It is a fine evening," I replied. "Having heard much about this old meeting-house, as it is called, I thought I would come here and have a look at it."

"Glad to see you, Sir," said Mr. Harry Gaines—this was his name—"many others have come here on the same errand."

"You are in charge of the place, I understand?"

"Yes," he replied, with a kind of yawn, "I have charge of it in the day-time, but 'tis hard to say who keeps charge at night. I'm the only one who has remained here longer than a year or two, and if I don't change my mind, I shan't be here another. I might perhaps try and stay, but my wife tells me that if I don't leave soon she will; and that's how 'tis now."

I remarked that as they had a comfortable home, with the use of a garden and the proceeds of the orchard, it would not be wisdom to give it up because the place had the name of being haunted.

"I wish it was only the name," he replied; "a little doesn't frighten me, but when 'tis the same uproar and

devil's work nearly night after night, I can't stand it much longer. To be kept from one's natural rest at night would break down any constitution."

From the man's appearance it seemed to me that if his rest had been greatly disturbed, it would have shown on him differently. As it was, he was as stout and healthy looking as the landlord across the stream. He was evidently better informed, and there was no lack of resolution in his florid countenance.

"You have visitors here very often, I am told?" said I.

"Yes," said he, with some nonchalance, "there are plenty of curious people in the world. But some who come once never want to come again, and I can't blame them."

"Well," said I, "I belong to the curious ones, and I came here purposely to look at the place, and to see anything of the supernatural that can be discovered. To be plain with you, friend, I have but little faith in what has been told me in relation to the ghostly beings who are said to appear in that house or anywhere else, and with your permission I should like to have an opportunity of testing their reality."

"Oh! that you can have, of course," he leisurely replied. "You are not the only doubter that has come here, and like others you may perhaps go away perfectly satisfied."

"That is what I wish to be. But tell me," I asked, "have you ever seen anything in that house to justify you in believing that it was anything supernatural?"

"Have I?" he replied with apparent surprise; "yes, scores of times. I and my wife have seen them around here even in the broad daylight. Why, no later than last week the man with the red cap was seen here again."

The man with the red cap! Why, surely, I thought,

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that must be the very person I saw with the fishing-rod by the stream; and then I remembered that the land-lord at the inn had also mentioned something about a man with a red cap. Still, though he had disappeared so suddenly, I scarcely believed he was anything else than what he looked to be at the time.

"Have you seen him?" I asked.

"I saw him only yesterday," he replied. "He for some reason rarely appears but by daylight. Sometimes we can see him looking out from one of them windows," and he pointed to the old house. "Sometimes he is seen sitting under a tree reading, sometimes down by the stream fishing, and sometimes in other places."

He glanced inquiringly at me as if he expected to hear me relate what I had witnessed down by the stream, but I thought it best to say nothing of it.

"I suppose sights and disturbances in that house are only seen and heard at night?" I asked.

"Seldom but at night," he answered.

"And do you find people courageous enough to go alone there after dark?"

"A few will, but they generally hurry out half dead with fear; some only venture to stand on the door-step to hear the noise."

"Well, now," said I, rather deliberately, "I came here with the intention, as I said before, to see for myself, and with your permission I wish to remain in that house to-night. This night above all others in the year will be their time to come if they can do so. You have no doubt heard that ghosts generally make their appearance about Christmas?" And here I handed him half a crown.

He accepted the money thankfully and put it in his pocket. He saw that I was in earnest, and after eyeing me rather furtively, he was silent for a moment and then replied:—

"I cannot refuse you if you say you are determined; but if anything happens, don't blame me; I can't be held responsible. I'd advise you not to try it."

"Try it I shall," said I, "and if you come and stay with me you shall have as much more. You shall have it any way if they let me out again."

The fee I gave him being, I presume, more than he usually received, put him, I thought, in a more willing humor. He protested, however, against keeping me company, but he said that if I wished it he would furnish me with lights and a fire, and that the best room should be made as comfortable for me as possible.

This being decided on, he expressed his readiness to let me enter the house as soon as I liked, but as there was sufficient time, he thought it would be better first to take a walk around and see the garden, the orchard, and the few outbuildings, as if he were desirous of convincing me that there was nothing kept about the premises which might create suspicion in the mind of a stranger. In what I may call our ramble, I noticed nothing out of the ordinary line, except that notwithstanding the fine view which could be seen around, I fancied that there was an air or look of loneliness there, and I somehow felt it rather depressing.

The garden looked as if tolerably well kept. It was plentifully stocked with currant and gooseberry bushes. There were flower beds with boxwood borders, and most of the walks were nicely gravelled. A sun-dial was set up near an old well, which in summer time was amply shaded by a large tree standing close by. The orchard was, I think, for its size, one of the best I had ever seen. The trees were in fine condition, and the annual yield must have been very profitable. There were but few animals kept,—a cow, a goat or two; in one of the sheds I saw a little donkey, and near his stall a good-sized bull-dog was fastened by a chain; besides these, a lot of domestic fowl were seen around.

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After this he asked me to his cottage. His wife, a rather comely person, received me very kindly. I saw no children; neither was the boy present whom I had observed there on my arrival. Everything within the little home appeared to be very orderly and comfortable. One would think that no ghost had ever entered here to interfere in the least with the domestic comfort of this particular abode. We had nearly an hour's pleasant conversation, but when Mrs. Gaines heard that I had asked permission to remain in the old house over night, she raised her hands in astonishment, her face wore a serious expression, but the only remark she made was a kind of half-exclamation, "Lord save us!" Harry Gaines then whispered to his wife, they went into a little room, and in a short time he returned, holding in his hand a large key, which was to give us entrance to the abandoned habitation.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHRISTMAS.

On opening the door there was a dull sound, and the sudden rush of air made some of the loose windows rattle. We entered a long, wide hall, which was very dusty, the ceiling and wall angles being plentifully draped with cobwebs. I thought there was nothing to prevent those in charge from keeping at least the entrance in better condition. To the right, we walked into a good-sized apartment; dust and cobwebs here also in profusion. Two long desks, like those used in a school-room, and a few forms, were the only things in

the shape of furniture we saw here. Gaines told me that some years ago a school had been opened in this room, but that in less than a month not a scholar would attend, so the thing was given up. A door at the end led into a smaller room. It was in this he said that the murder had been committed. There were two windows, and a door led out to a back yard. We stopped here for some minutes. I heard a fresh account of the crime, and was shown where the burglars had broken in, and where the bodies lay after the criminals had made their escape. Sweeping away the dust on one part of the floor with the side of his hand, he showed me a large stain—a blood mark which he said could not be washed out. Those which had been spattered on the wall had been covered with whitewash, and though the room was one of the best lighted and most cheerful in the house, it was in consequence of the murder called "the dark chamber."

On the opposite side of the hall was the largest apartment in the building. It was much cleaner than the others, and had formerly been the dining-room, or the principal room of the hotel. It was in this that the members of the Society of Friends used to meet for the transaction of business, as well as perhaps for religious purposes. There were no chattels or movables of any kind here, and one might think it was kept empty to give its spectral visitants a clear space for their nightly orgies.

A wide, massive staircase, with a heavy oaken rail and oaken balusters, led to the upper part of the house. There was another long hall, and on each side were a number of rooms. Into one of the largest of these, nearly all the furniture, which for some reason had been left behind by the last occupants of the place, was stowed away. Old-fashioned chairs, and tables, and bedsteads with tall posts, corner cupboards, bookcases,

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and a large escritoire; besides these, a few pictures and
portraits in ancient costume of those no doubt long
passed away, and some moth-eaten bedding, curtains,
&c., piled together in a confused heap, the whole nearly
filling the entire department. On the opposite side
from this was a pleasant room, commanding a fine view.
It was empty. It had a fire-place, from which, judging
by appearances, smoke had not ascended for many
years. Having seen most of the other rooms, I took a
fancy to this one, and I told Gaines that if he lit a coal
fire in the grate, and gave me a table, a chair, and
something to lie on should I feel inclined to sleep, I
should remain in it until morning. He of course made
no positive objection, and then after we had visited the
range of bedrooms on the third story, and looked out
from some of the quaint dormer windows, we returned
quite unharmed to the cottage to partake of supper, to
which I had been kindly invited.

It was quite dark when Gaines and I went again across
to the old building. He, I fancied, affected to be a little
timid, but I went on ahead of him, opened the door
myself, and stood in the large hall alone, even before
he had succeeded in lighting a candle at the lantern
which he had brought with him. The night had become
gusty, and the candle was scarcely lighted when it was
blown out, and in a moment afterwards the light in the
lantern was also extinguished, leaving us both in the
midst of the blackest darkness.

While we stood there groping, I heard something pass
quickly close to my ear, and immediately afterwards my
cheek was touched or rather softly struck, and when I
instinctively raised my hands to discover if there was
anything near or over my head, one hand was struck
with more force, and my companion made a rush for
the door, telling me that he had felt a man's fist on his
forehead, and had heard whisperings or mutterings

which had made his heart bounce. I had heard something of the kind, and I must say, that at the moment a peculiar impulse prompted me to follow the footsteps of Gaines pretty quickly. But as soon as we had got a few yards away, on our flight to the cottage, I suddenly stopped, almost ashamed of the fear that had lent such suppleness to my legs. Still, with the power I had left me for deliberate thought, the suggestion came that as I was safely out of that den, I ought not to return.

Gaines was now far in advance of me, and when he got to his own door he stood and shouted—"I told you so, I told you so. Take my advice and don't go back."

"No," I replied, "I shall go back, I am now more determined than ever."

In fact I was really annoyed that I had for so little cause made such a lively retreat, and, urging him to relight the lantern and accompany me again, I told him that as soon as a fire was kindled I should let him depart, and that when I had the door locked and barred I should attempt to keep sole possession until morning.

During our absence the large front door of the old house had remained wide open, and when we entered again we took good care to keep the lantern secure, and to keep our lights from being blown out a second time. Gaines brought a basket of coal, some sticks, and a few other things to make me as comfortable as possible. We busied ourselves in making a fire; a small table and a chair or two were brought in from the other room, and shortly the apartment looked not only comfortable but cheerful. As the coals blazed up and made all bright around, Gaines laid his hand on my arm and cried—"Hark!"

The windows had been rattling, but we had managed to wedge them and stop the motion, and an old pillow with which we had filled the space or opening left by a

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broken pane had been blown in, but we had this better
secured; now, however, there was a kind of commotion
outside, taps were heard on the windows, and a strange
fluttering sound came at intervals down the chimney.

"It must be the wind," I said; "it has very likely
torn down some of the ivy, and it is flapping here and
there on the roof."

"Not that, not that!" said he, gravely shaking his
head, "'tis something else, and you'll likely find out
more about it before midnight. The ivy has clung to
the old chimney for many a year and through many a
storm—no, 'tis not the ivy."

He looked very seriously at me; but not in the least
disconcerted, I assured him that I felt confident there
was nothing extraordinary in what we had just heard,
and that I had probably given the most reasonable ex-
planation as to its cause. He soon afterwards went
away, and I was alone.

For some time after this everything was very quiet.
The wind had lulled, it had grown calm, and as I stood
to look out of a window, I saw the full moon just rising
from behind one of the distant dark hills, spreading its
soft lustre down the rough sides of the elevated land,
and giving a silvery outline to trees, branches, and other
prominent objects that were most conspicuous. What
a sheen of celestial grandeur was spread around! Here
and there a star shone out as if to hail the queen of
night, and afar clouds were drifting away as if deter-
mined that the auspicious day soon to arrive should see
no shadow in the glorious firmament, and that the natal
morn so dear to the Christian world should be magnifi-
cently ushered in attended by floods of imperial sun-
light.

It was after nine o'clock when Gaines left me. Here
I was alone, and now my courage was to be put to the

test in a different manner from what it ever previously had been. However, it was not the first time in my life that I had been called on to meet danger. I then remembered the field of Waterloo, and of how I had seen men fall by my side, while I expected every moment to receive a fatal bullet. But at that time all was dreadful noise and excitement, and the opposing and assailing forces seen in almost every direction were living forms of flesh and blood. Here it was now, I might say, perfect stillness, and should any seek to beset me, I might, from what I had been told, expect to see some ghostly shape whose very look might chill my blood, and stop the pulses of my heart power. Mastering every feeling like fear I stirred up the fire, snuffed the candles—had two lighting—and for some minutes I paced briskly around the room. A thousand recollections of the past rushed through my mind, and while preoccupied in this way I gave scarcely a thought to anything supernatural. To be sure, I thought of the dead, but it was of many of the beloved ones who had left me, and whom I would now be glad to see return.

I stood at the window again; a large black cloud had completely hidden the moon, but in the dim light, and while trying to define the indistinct objects near and the distance, I saw what appeared to be a boy cross the road and run along, leading a large dog which followed him. In a few minutes I lost sight of them, and though I stood watching for some minutes afterwards, I did not see them again. I now sat by the fire, it looked very cheerful, and in order to pass the time as agreeably as I could, I commenced to sing a hymn suitable for the season:—

"While shepherds watch their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around."

er from what it ever previously was not the first time in my life on to meet danger. I then re- Waterloo, and of how I had seen while I expected every moment to But at that time all was dreadful and the opposing and assailing every direction were living forms ere it was now, I might say, per- d any seek to beset me, I might, told, expect to see some ghostly might chill my blood, and stop power. Mastering every feeling the fire, snuffed the candles—I for some minutes I paced briskly thousand recollections of the past and, and while preoccupied in this thought to anything supernatural. of the dead, but it was of many of had left me, and whom I would urn.

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Having finished this hymn, and been cheered as it were by the sound of my own voice, I began another:—

"Hark! the herald angels sing
'Glory to the new born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled;
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumphs of the skies;
With th' angelic hosts proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!'"

It was no doubt a long time since a human voice had been heard singing a Christmas song so lustily in that old fabric; but no echo returned a single sound; no response came back from those household voices of other days when, perhaps, long before I was born, it may have been that in this very room, then wreathed with holly, father and mother, and little red-faced sleepy children, who had begged not to be sent to bed—all now resting in yonder graveyard—sat up together to usher in the glorious morn, uniting in a simple strain of welcome and praise to the infant God, the new-born Prince of Peace. And then I thought what thousands all over the world would on the morrow meet once more together around the festive board; what kind and loving greetings, what presents would be distributed, and what wonderful stories would be heard by the young concerning the feats of Santa Claus; what a multitude of bells would be rung out, and what sermons would be preached in relation to the great events connected with this day of rejoicing!

Yet, I thought, how strange it was that in one sense the legends regarding Santa Claus were just as true as the popular notion that our ordinary Christmas Day is the actual natal day of the Christian Saviour! We are informed that the primitive Christians kept no such festivals, perhaps having been prejudiced against it on account of its heathen origin, and that it was not instituted until near the end of the second century. At

first there was no uniformity as to the period for the observance of the nativity of Christ among the early churches. By some the festival was held in January, and by others in April or May, and it is asserted by competent authorities who have made the question a study, that the 25th of December cannot be, and really is not, the birth-day of the Redeemer; nor, indeed, is even the actual year known with certainty. Mosheim, the great ecclesiastical historian, says: "The year in which it happened has not hitherto been fixed with certainty, notwithstanding the deep and laborious researches of the learned." And Rev. Canon Farrar, in his "Life of Christ," says: "All attempts to discover the month and the day of the nativity are useless."

Though the Church of Rome and the Church of England still recognize this festival, yet the great body of Dissenters are rather indifferent to it, mostly considering the day in its religious aspect as a mere "human invention—savoring of Papistical will worship"; and they might have added, of heathen allegory. So strong at one time was Protestant hostility to this anniversary, that the Puritan Parliament abolished Christmas, and holly and ivy were denounced as seditious badges.

There is but little doubt but that the day in which we celebrate our Christmas, was, in remote times, centuries before Christ, one of the great Heathen festivals—the new year or birth of the sun. In Pagan mythology, "Capricornus the Goat is said to have suckled the infant Jupiter; of which enigma the undoubted solution is that the sun, who is Jupiter, first beginning to rise on the 25th of December, when the days have been shortest on the 21st."*

Among the ancients, Hercules, as well as Jupiter and Apollo, meant the sun. The twelve labors of Hercules

* Rev. Robert Taylor's discourses, p. 42.

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represent the twelve months of the year. The Ortho- dox writer, Parkhurst, in his Hebrew-Lexicon, admits a great "resemblance between Christian and Pagan mythology." He says: "It is well known that by Hercules, in the physical mythology of the Heathens, was meant the sun, or solar light, and his twelve famous labors have been referred to the sun's passing through the twelve zodiacal signs; and this, perhaps, not with- out some foundation. But the labors of Hercules seem to have had a still higher view, and to have been origin- ally designed as emblematical memorials of what the real *Son of God* and Saviour of the world was to do and suffer for our sakes." The period assigned to Hercules is nearly 1,300 before our era. He was the son of a god. The legend of his death symbolizes the sunset, after which he ascended in a cloud to heaven.

The author of the Celtic Druids tells us that "The Essenes were descended from the prophet Elijah, and the Carmelite monks from the Essenes, whose monas- teries were founded before the Christian era; that these monks, holding that from time immemorial, a certain day had been held sacred to the god Sol, the sun, as his birth-day, and that this god was distinguished by the epithet, The Lord, persuaded themselves that this Lord could be no other than their Lord God; whereupon they adopted the religious rites of this Lord, and his supposed birth-day, December 25th, became a Christian festival, Paganism being thus spliced and amalgamated into Christianity."

And he further says: "It was the custom of the Heathen, long before the birth of Christ, to celebrate the birth-day of their gods"; and that the 25th of December "was a great festival with the Persians, who, in very early times, celebrated the birth of their God, Mithras."

Higgins, in his "Anacalypsis," tells us that "The

Egyptians celebrated the birth of the son of Isis on the 25th day of December." And St. Chrysostom, referring to a certain Pagan festival, says: "On this day also, (Dec. 25th,) the birth of Christ was lately fixed at Rome, in order that whilst the Heathen were busied with their profane ceremonies, the Christians might perform their holy rites undisturbed."

In England, as well as in many other countries of Europe, it was usual to commence the year at Christmas. We find it stated that "Gervase of Canterbury, who lived in the thirteenth century, mentions that almost all writers of his country agreed in regarding Christmas Day as the first of the year, because it forras, as it were, the term at which the sun finishes and recommences his annual course."

The differences of opinion regarding the person and character of Christ have been startling to many who, while studying theology, have been perplexed by accounts derived from Pagan and from Jewish sources, and who have investigated conflicting statements in order to discover truth. It is surprising to learn that certain early Christian sects, such as the Gnostics, the Docetas, the Ebionites, and others, actually denied the existence and sufferings of Christ, or at most but admitted that Reason was personified in him; the whole story and actions of his life being merely allegorical. Mosheim says that, "The greatest part of the Gnostics denied that Christ was clothed with a real body, or that he suffered really. Thus, while the very being of the Saviour was denied by certain sects of the early Christians, we have others at the present day whose doubts concerning him are generated from the fact that the leading and prominent incidents in the life of Christ had also been the most prominent incidents in the life of the Indian Saviour Chrishna, who lived centuries anterior to our era; and it is too well known that many who at first gladly believed the Christian story, were

of the son of Isis on the St. Chrysostom, referring says: "On this day also, Christ was lately fixed at the Heathen were busied, the Christians might be disturbed."

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regarding the person and when startling to many who, have been perplexed by and from Jewish sources, conflicting statements in is surprising to learn that such as the Gnostics, the others, actually denied the Christ, or at most but admitted in him; the whole being merely allegorical. The greatest part of the Gnostics held with a real body, or that while the very being of the sects of the early Christ—present day whose doubts were based from the fact that the incidents in the life of Christ and prominent incidents in the life of Krishna, who lived centuries ago, too well known that many of the Christian story, were

afterwards plunged into scepticism when they read the distasteful and almost overwhelming admissions of the pious and learned Sir William Jones, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Bengal, who was well acquainted with the Hindoostance language, and "beyond all competition the most eminent Oriental scholar in this or perhaps any other age."

In his Asiatic Researches, he tells us that, "In the Sanscrit Dictionary, compiled more than two thousand years ago, we have the whole story of the incarnate deity born of a virgin, and miraculously escaping in his infancy from the reigning tyrant of his country. . . . Krishna, the incarnate deity of the Sanscrit romance, continues to this hour the darling god of the Indian women. The sect of Hindoos who adore him with enthusiastic and almost exclusive devotion, have broached a doctrine that they maintain with eagerness, that . . . Krishna was the person of Vishnou (God) himself in a human form." The tyrant from whom Krishna escaped was Kansa, who, dreading the prediction that Krishna would yet overthrow his power, issued the command—"Let active search be made for whatever young children there may be upon the earth, and let every boy of unusual vigor be slain without remorse."

Though many other prototypes of the Christian Saviour—such as Buddha—have been brought forward to prove that his existence on earth is but a myth, Christians are told to be cautious about giving heed to such evidences. The advice given under the circumstances is, that we should pray for a stronger and greater measure of faith, and then, while suppressing every doubt, that we should submit like true believers to the great mysteries of Divine Revelation. Yet how few, comparatively, can do this! Were the scepticism in the church—even within the pulpit—made known, how many believers would stand amazed at the backsliding and degeneracy of these latter days!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GHOST.

The hours passed while thus reflecting on this important subject. How peaceful all seemed within and without! The silence was almost profound. I stole gently towards the window. The moonlight was now nearly as bright as day; not a cloud could be seen. Innumerable stars were in the heaven, and numerous ghost-like shadows within the range of my vision were apparently fixed and immovable on the earth. What perfect stillness! Not the gentlest wind to breathe a sigh for the withered leaves still clinging to the parent stem. The quietude of my own mind was unruffled by the slightest fear, and in a calmness of spirit, like what believers call the peace of God, I bethought me of the many acts of my own life, of the strange, the wild, the variegated, and the dolorous scenes which I had witnessed, and of those near and dear to me who had passed from the cares and trials of life never to return. In dwelling at this venerated season upon the ephemeral and transitory nature of sublunary things, my thoughts turned to the great hereafter, and while tears stood in my eyes, the question came—Is there to be a reunion of sundered hearts, of those who have long been parted, or shall we never meet again; there being as some believe an end of all consciousness at the hour of death; no resurrection, no future restoration, no infliction for successful crime, nor redress for the sufferings of virtue, but all alike, the evil and the good, to be placed on an equality in the interminable rest of the grave?

Just then a long low moan startled me from my reverie, and made my very hair stand on end! I instinctively grasped the nearest object and stood motionless.

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ject and stood motionless.

Then came another moan louder and more distinct, and in the stillness which followed, the village church clock struck out in clear tones the solemn hour of midnight. So sudden and startling was the interruption, that in spite of all I could do, I felt my limbs trembling, and this increased when something rushed along the hall dragging what I imagined to be a heavy chain. I am ashamed to say that at the moment I was so overcome by a peculiar feeling of terror that I was incapable of exercising the least self-control, and in a kind of horrid frenzy I would have jumped through the window were it not that my limbs were useless, and I felt unable to leave the spot on which I stood. All the frightful ghost stories I had ever heard recurred in a few seconds to my mind. A moan was heard again. Had my ears deceived me? And now did my eyes betray me, for the room seemed full of spectral faces glaring and frowning on me with hideous expression? The candles which a moment before had burned brightly grew dim, and at the end of the apartment the outlines of a form became visible, at first faintly, but gradually they developed into a human figure clothed in dark grey, the veritable figure of the fisherman with a red cap which I had heard so much of, and which I must have seen on the head of the man or the spectre the previous evening by the river.

In spite of all I could do my gaze was rivetted upon this apparition; it seemed impossible for me to turn my head away from it in any direction. There it stood with averted face. There was the red cap, the pale face, the stooped form almost just as I had seen it in the distance by daylight. I felt as if completely overcome by some strange unnatural influence. In a little time, however, while still looking at the shadowy form, I made a desperate mental effort, and regained my self-possession. I felt able to move, and then it occurred to me that my

fear had shaped this phantom to my imagination; that ocularly I had been deceived, and that all was but an illusion. I rubbed my eyes and looked again; the faces had disappeared, and the spectral form, which at first had almost chilled my blood, now seemed fading away. It grew less and less distinct; then it became but the faintest shadow, and now—it was gone!

I never felt more relieved. The candles burned brightly again. I was surprised that I had given way to a sudden fright which, had I exercised more control, might not have alarmed me or even a resolute school-boy. In the flush of anger which quickly followed, I lost almost every fear, and were a demon then to face me I think I could have commenced an assault. I stirred up the fire, for the coals had almost ceased to burn, and seizing a heavy piece of wood which lay near the fire-place, I stood on my defence, prepared to meet any intruder, and I fancied I might not have long to wait. Another moan, more long and melancholy than any which had preceded it, was now heard, and that was scarcely ended, when a thump came against the door that I thought would burst it in. Heavy steps were heard overhead, and along the hall the chain rattled once more, and then down the stairway, sending a dull echo throughout the building. Still after all I felt no trace of returning fear, for at this time I somehow imagined that there was nothing supernatural in anything that had yet taken place. I put the stick under my arm, and lifting one of the candles I went softly towards the door, ready to rush out and follow if possible whatever caused the disturbance. A louder knock came against it and the latch was lifted. Now was my opportunity. I hastily undid the fastenings, swung the door open, and stood with a light in the wide hall just in time to see the actual fisherman with the red cap retreating towards the stairs which led below, and followed by a large black dog dragging a heavy chain after him.

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For a moment the apparition of the man startled me, but when I saw the animal with the chain evidently strapped to his neck, I suspected at once that the so-called ghosts were but a clumsy imposition which I might possibly be able to detect and expose. As to the positive deception I now became more satisfied. In old stories that I had heard and read, it used to be related that a sulphurous smell accompanied the visitation of evil spirits, but here a different odor regaled my nostrils—a strong smell of tobacco, a thing I never use. Tobacco as a sedative is an uneasy or to a wandering ghost, was out of the question. This left no doubt on my mind but that the fisherman was either my friend, Mr. Gaines himself, or an accomplice, and I was determined to entrap him or them in a manner least expected.

Now, thought I, if I can lead them to believe that I am really afraid, they will return and become more bold in their attempts. In a tremulous voice I asked, "In God's name, who are you, or what do you want?"

I hurried back into the room and made a pretence of fastening the door more securely; then putting on my long gray travelling overcoat, which I had thrown on the back of a chair early in the night, I tied a red handkerchief around my head, so as to look as nearly as possible like a cap, I opened the door softly, closed it again, and stood a little aside in the dark hall. I knew that another knock at the door, such as had been given, would send it wide open, and I knew that the light would be sufficient to let them see me and very likely make them believe that I was no fictitious representative of the fisherman, but the actual ghost himself; for though a counterfeit of the man with the red cap might be attempted, and no doubt had often been attempted for a special purpose, yet there was a prevailing belief among most persons in the neighborhood—I think even Gaines himself gave some credit to such a story—that a ghostly

apparition of this kind was more than once seen in former times; and there was an object to gain in a fraudulent personation of the drowned angler, for inn-keepers and others in the village of Roblin would be materially served by keeping up the delusion of the haunted meeting-house; but I presume it had scarcely ever entered their minds to imagine that any one else would venture to counterfeit the same ghost for their particular consternation.

I had not long to remain alone in the hall. With my back pressed closely to the wall, I stood on the opposite side a pace or so distant from the room door. Soon I heard a whisper at the end of the long hall, and the softest possible footstep was heard ascending the stairs from the lower part of the house. The parties, whoever they might be, were no doubt getting ready for another rush. It was perfectly dark where I stood, but a window at the furthest end from me allowed sufficient light, dim as it was, to enable me to see anything approaching from that direction. In less than a minute two figures stood between me and the window; one the size of a full-grown man, the other evidently but a boy; and there, sure enough, was also what looked like a large dog. Presently the man gave a long-drawn moan, the boy gave one feebler but more melancholy; then he flung down what sounded like a heavy chain, which he must have been holding up, and the noise resounded throughout the building. On then came the boy, followed by the dog, the chain rattling all the way. They passed me hurriedly, even the dog not having detected me, and, ascending a stairs, made their way to the upper apartments, and again all was still.

This part of the performance having been thus again re-enacted, I waited the next. Step by step, as if on tip-toe, the other figure now approached me. Were one listening in the room I had just left, the tick of a clock

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could hardly be heard. He was now almost within my reach. He stooped with his ear close to the door, as if to discover the least sound. All inside was of course as still as death; then, drawing back, he struck the door, evidently with his open hand, probably to make a louder noise, and it flew wide open.

In a moment I stepped into the broad light and confronted the disturber of my midnight hours. I stood before him stiff as a post, with a solemn frown on my countenance, my arms close to my side, the hand in which I held the billet of wood being drawn a little behind. He gazed on me for a second or two with the wild, despairing look of a startled maniac. There was Gaines himself—I knew his face at once—with the veritable gray coat and red cap, and now that the tables were turned, he stood trembling and almost transfixed to the spot, while lines of perfect horror were depicted on his visage. If he had never seen the fisherman before, he must have certainly believed that he saw him now for the first time. I was going to salute him with a moan as dreadful as one of his own, but I was unable to do so, and, in spite of every restraint, I had to laugh outright in his very face. It was, however, evidently no laughter to him, my outburst of cachination must have terrified him as if it were the gibbering of a fiend. Without saying a word—he must have been unable to utter a single exclamation—off he started and ran along the hall like a hare. I followed him, and just as he was about to descend the stairs I made a grab at his head and returned with his red cap to the room in triumph.

I was now to all intents and purposes master of the situation. The dog gave a bark; it was his first attempt that way during the night. He must have had intelligence enough to discover that something was wrong; the boy very probably also feeling that this was the

case. Not wishing to alarm the lad, I took off my grey overcoat, removed the red handkerchief from my head, took a candle, and followed up stairs. I had scarcely reached the upper landing when something rushed by, extinguishing the light. This was inexplicable, but still I felt confident it was nothing supernatural. I groped my way down again, relighted the candle, and called on the boy to come to me. The dog barked again. I repeated my call, telling the boy that, as there was no way for his escape, unless he obeyed I should wait and watch for him until daylight, and then take him before a magistrate for aiding and assisting in an imposition.

Alarmed by this threat, repented more than once, down he came, followed by the dog dragging the chain after him. I was not very much surprised to discover that he was the boy I had seen at the inn across the river the previous evening, and who had most probably been hurried off to tell Gaines that an inquisitive visitor was coming to see the old meeting-house, and to tell him to make the preparations usually got ready to impress strangers with a stronger belief that the place and its surroundings were haunted.

CHAPTER XIX.

EXORCISM.

"Now, my boy," said I, after I had closed the door and placed my chair against it to prevent his escape, "I know who you are; I saw you across at the inn, yesterday. I'm a detective"—I truly felt myself to be one at the time and would have considered it no misnomer—"and I now know what brought you here. You have been wickedly engaged with Mr. Gaines, who has charge of this house, to make people believe it is haunted. Is not that the case?"

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The boy hung his head and remained silent. He was
a crafty-looking chap, one just such as could be used as
an accomplice by the landlord of the inn, as well as by
Gaines, for the veriest trifle of recompense.

"See here," I continued, "I have found out all.
You know that red cap?" and I held it out before him.
He looked at it with perfect astonishment, and in a
confused way asked:—

"Be Malster Gaines sent to prison?"

He may have probably thought that half a dozen
policemen or constables were somewhere about on the
watch, and that Gaines had been arrested.

"Not yet," I answered, "but if you and he do not
make a full confession of how you have imposed on the
public and made this property of little or no value to
the owner, you and he may be sent to jail, and from
that be perhaps sent much further, even transported
out of the country, even to Botany Bay."

He began to cry, and, boy-like, tried to throw the
blame on others. He fancied himself completely in my
power, and, on questioning him, he made every admis-
sion necessary to prove that certain parties, through
motives of self-interest, had led the public to believe
that the old meeting-house was haunted, and that,
though a number of persons had come every year to see
the place, I was the only one he knew of who had had
sufficient courage and determination to remain in the
building after night. I then asked him:—

"How long have you been living at the inn?"

"Nearly or it moight be aboot three year."

"Where do your parents live?"

"Yoonder o'er across the stream," he replied, nod-
ding his head to indicate the direction.

"Have you ever seen anything like a glost in this
house?"

"No, Sir."

"Has Gaines or his wife ever seen one here?"

"I doan't bleeve so."

"Has anybody else?"

"Not that I knows on."

"You saw me at the inn yesterday evening, and were sent to tell Gaines I was coming?"

"Yeeas, Sir."

"Was not Gaines the fisherman that I saw on the bank of the river?"

"Yeeas, Sir. He run doon when he heard you were a-cooming, an' stood on the bank."

"Were you near him?"

"I wor a-watching of you close by."

"How was it that he disappeared so suddenly?"

"When you toorned yer head to look oop at t'auchoose, I clapped hawnds, an' then he run into the greeat tree joost at t'soide."

"Ah! that was the way, was it? And then he took a short cut to the house and got there before I had?"

"Yeeas, Sir."

"What was it that put out the candle and the lantern last night, just after Gaines and I first entered the hall? But perhaps you can't tell, you were not with us at that time?"

He considered for a while and replied:—

"I deean't naa, but it maun be the baats. About t'gloaming they are a-floapin' here by t'score."

This struck me as being the proper explanation. Something had been fluttering around Gaines and myself at the time, and when he told me that he had felt a man's fist on his forehead, and affected to be alarmed, he must have known well that both he and I had been touched by one of the fluttering bats which frequented the old house in numbers; and it was, no doubt, a bat that had put out the light I held, when, but a few minutes previously, I had followed the boy up the stairs.

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Changing the subject, I asked the boy several questions on other matters, but, though he appeared to be naturally shrewd, he had never received the least instruction in the ordinary line of education. He could not read; in fact, he could not tell one letter from another, and, like a thousand others of his class in England, being merely influenced by some rude superstitious notions, he had no conception of religion or of his responsibility to a Divine Being, and but a frail idea as to the existence of God himself.

He lay before the fire and was soon asleep. The dog betook himself to a corner and followed the example, while, to prevent their escape, I sat, covered by my large coat, with my back to the door, and thought over my adventures and of how easy it might have been by fair inquiry and investigation to dispel many other delusions just as I now felt that I had in a manner done so with regard to this haunted building. For many years there were a number of credulous persons of nearly all classes, the so-called educated as well as the ignorant, who had readily believed this old wives' fable, permitting a vicious tradition to be handed down from father to son without proper inquiry, giving to a clumsy legend of this kind all the coloring of truth, and enabling men such as Gaines, and the innkeeper, and others in Roblin, to add to their store by the promulgation of a falsehood, and to live in comparative ease by the practice of gross deception.

But then, thought I, how averse are mankind in general to investigate the claims of any principle or doctrine which they may have been taught from childhood to consider a truth! Too often they are led to look upon the distorted representation of virtue as the beauty of holiness. The craven submission of the servile, or the unyielding stubbornness of learned stupidity in the church, and at the head of schools, colleges, and uni-

versities, has been a bar to progress for generations. Popular error has been triumphantly marching all over the world in the beautiful garb of Truth; and, at the present day, many ordained as well as secular teachers, apparently unable or unwilling to detect the imposition, fall prostrate before haughty Assumption, and shout hosannas in praise of consecrated trumpery, and antiquated charlatanism.

What will my spiritual brother and associate say when I tell him to-morrow or next day how easily I dispersed the ghosts of this fabric which had such an existence in his imagination? He may not believe my report. Having hugged the delusion so long, he, like the host of sticklers for old notions, may be unwilling to abandon it for stern reality. Though a teacher himself, he may be averse to unlearn much of the useless stuff that has crowded his brain to the exclusion of useful knowledge. 'Tis hard for some to abandon the myths which are in a way so comfortable and consoling for facts which must unceremoniously uproot their fancied theories and dissolve the misty aerial castles of their speculative dreams. We have at present men even in the church who will believe any absurdity, anything conflicting with the sober reason, provided it is backed by the least shadow of authority coming from the reputed learned or wise. Notwithstanding all their acquired knowledge, some will remain natural dunces and credulous drivellers to the end of their days. The Jesuits are said to be learned men, but, like others of the church of Rome, they still uphold the Pope's authority, telling us that he is the sole vicar of Christ. They believe in the virtue of relics, in prayers to the Virgin, in invocation to saints, in purgatory, and in the nonsensical doctrine of transubstantiation. The early Christian fathers accepted as truth the pious superstitious stories of the most childish character, ecclesiastical history being full of the most puerile and

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extravagant legends; and Catholics, as well as many Protestants, still believe in Constantine's vision of the cross, even while certain leading Christians venture to doubt the story of the sun's standing still, or of the flight of Elijah in a chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire, to heaven. As has been shown, there was a period in which pious eminent men believed in witches. We know that John Wesley believed in ghosts and in haunted houses. And now, when able commentators cast a doubt on Scriptural records which tell us of a universal deluge, of the building of the tower of Babel, of Jonah and the whale, of Balaam and the ass, of Daniel in the lion's den, and of the numerous dreams, visions, miracles, and judgments, by which it is said that God made himself known in those days, and assert that such passages in the Scriptures are but interpolations, mistranslations, or misinterpretations not to be relied on, unlearned men can scarcely be blamed for entertaining doubts on such subjects; and the humane and forgiving hold loftier conceptions of the Divine Being when able preachers at the present day tell us that the doctrine of eternal punishment is a libel on the character of the Almighty.

I must have slept during the remainder of the night. Nothing returned to disturb my repose. I awoke about dawn, the candles were nearly burned out, and the fire was but smouldering. The boy was still asleep, and the dog lay in his corner. My first act this Christmas morning was to secure my trophy. I placed the red cap under my coat, which I buttoned up carefully. I shook the boy; he was very drowsy, and when he opened his eyes he scarcely knew where he was. I wanted to get away from Roblin in good time so as to reach home before dinner. I did not, however, wish to leave without taking another survey of the whole premises. Accompanied by the boy, I revisited every room. Apparently

nothing in the house had been disturbed. The bats had I suppose taken flight, or were in their hiding places. On looking up at the chimney I discovered the cause of the flapping and commotion we had heard at the time we made the fire. This particular chimney, as well as the others, had been for years the refuge for a numerous brood of sparrows, and, of course, when the smoke of the fire drove them from their retreat, they flew about wildly in all directions, tapping at the windows, and causing the particular disturbance which we had heard over the roof.

I now wished to visit the hollow tree. In a few minutes the boy led me by a pathway to the bank of the stream. There sure enough was the large oak tree by the side of which the motionless fisherman had stood the previous evening. A much stouter man than Harry Gaines could easily have hidden inside of it. He had many times hidden there, as I learned he often had to astonish and often to frighten away curious strangers. But his occupation in this particular line was nearly gone. He would be seen no more here in the character of the dead angler, or be found wandering around to terrify visitors. He and others had in a manner held fraudulent possession for years of the land and premises known as the old meeting-house property, paying no rent, but deriving with his confederates a comfortable amount yearly, by the practice of a deliberate imposition on the public. Harry Gaines had, I found, been much longer in charge of the place than he led me to understand at first, and I also learned that though he had told many persons that neither he nor his wife would remain there another year, he had no intention of leaving. Probably for good and sufficient reasons he did not make his appearance while I remained, and, his cottage being closed fast, I saw nothing more of him or his wife.

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The landlord at the inn, though evidently quite em-
barrassed when I told him my story, affected to be
innocent of any co-operation on his part with Gaines or
any one else to keep up the delusion concerning the
haunted house, but I could see guilt in his countenance.
I saw that he was quite uneasy during my stay; so after
I had partaken of a hearty breakfast, I gave the boy a
shilling and a fatherly lecture, and took my departure.

In about a month from that time my friend had suc-
ceeded in getting a long lease of the old meeting-house
and its four acres of land on very favorable terms. Harry
Gaines, thoroughly exposed, and probably ashamed, had
to leave the premises, perhaps to practice deception
somewhere else. And now, instead of a noted ghost-
house, Roblin can boast of having one of the best
conducted private boarding and day schools in the
country; and neither ghost nor goblin of any kind has
returned to claim possession.

Since my first visit to that plersant village I have
been repeatedly thanked, not only by the owner of the
property, but by others interested in the progress of the
place. Some of the newspapers gave an amusing account
of my Christmas adventure, giving widely different
statements as well as various descriptions of the *red
cap*; but though I handed that article to our superin-
tendent, on my return, for his careful inspection, and
gave him the most minute particulars of what I had
heard and seen in and around the haunted house, yet
so apparently wedded was he to his supernatural theory,
that without reasonable evidence he still confidently
asserted his belief in ghosts, and that sooner or later
they would—when perhaps conditions were more favor-
able—return to convince me and others of their reality!
Still may not some be excused for their credulity? May
not the term “supernatural,” as it is ordinarily used,
be an impropriety in language; for who can define the
laws of Nature, or limit their possibilities?

CHAPTER XX.

THE REPRIEVE.

A gloomy dawn! The light came slowly again upon the earth as if reluctant to disturb the lingering solemnity of night, and as if knowing that with the early day the pulsation of another heart should cease and another life be yielded up to gratify the insatiable demands of the Molock of the law,—“the prince of the realm of tears,”—and to satisfy the Nemesis of Christian legislators.

I had arisen while the struggling light barely succeeded in making objects near or distant at all visible. Having retired at a late hour, I had slept but little, for a tumult of melancholy thoughts had kept me awake, and it was long after midnight before I was able to fall into anything that might be called sound sleep; and, even when that came, uneasy dreams kept me restless at intervals, so that on the whole the rest I had had was not refreshing; and as I had on this particular morning a most painful and solemn duty to perform, I felt by no means as vigorous in body or mind as I wished to be.

I had nearly a mile to walk through a drizzling rain, and early as it was I met several persons on my way, who, perhaps having nothing else to do, or, most likely with many, out of sheer curiosity, left their beds, and maybe their breakfasts, to secure favorable spots from which to witness the consummation of another legal atrocity; for there was to be a public execution that morning after eight o'clock. Taking but little notice of

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these, I hurried on until the high walls of the gloomy prison of Radmar stood before me. It was late the previous night when its great massive gate was opened to permit my departure, and now, after having given my name at the grating, locks were opened and bolts and bars again withdrawn to grant me an entrance.

The large prison formed three sides of a quadrangular yard. To the right of the gate-way, as you entered, was a large apartment used by the prison authorities for the reception of prisoners on their first arrival. There was also connected with this a kind of office in which visitors to the prison were obliged to register their names. Though frequently there of late, I had to write my name and address again, and now, having done this, I approached the fire-place, from which the blazing coals sent a glow of cheerfulness even within this plain but stern-looking room. The morning was chilly, and while I stood warming my hands, another person approached evidently for a similar purpose. He was apparently a stranger, at least he was one to me, for I had never seen him there before. An expression of good nature was in his face; he was courteous and polite in manners. He bowed to me, and as he was smoking a short pipe, he said he hoped the smell of tobacco would not be disagreeable to me.

“In fact,” said he, “on a morning like this, when the weather itself, as well as particular circumstances, have a tendency to give one the blues, I feel some- way relieved and soothed when I get a few quiet whiffs.”

I admitted that the great majority of our countrymen, even the very poorest, derived great enjoyment in such a practice, and that though I did not use tobacco myself, if it made others more comfortable, or in any way dis- sipated care, it was a simple remedy, which, though

no doubt injurious in the long run, kept for the time being many a man from harassing and distracting thoughts.

"That I know to be the case," he replied; "I've seen a man wasted away by some fatal disorder ask for a few puffs maybe but one hour before he died; the narcotic effect of the weed seemed to have a soothing result, and the creature soon passed away as placid as a child. What a pity to deny such a comfort when all medical nostrums had proved ineffectual!"

I told him I had witnessed a case of the kind myself.

"I have no doubt of it," he said, in the most friendly way, "and when I find a fellow in trouble, no matter from what cause, if opportunity offers I tender him the palliative or the restorative which has often proved beneficial to myself. You may feel surprised," continued he, lowering his voice a little, "when I tell you that but an hour ago the jailer was visiting the poor chap—in fact, I may call him my patient—in cell number 39. Seeing how sad he looked, I filled him a pipe and let him have his last smoke. Mr. May, the jailer, was willing, and—what do you think?—before we left him, though he had complained of want of sleep, he having spent a comparatively sleepless night, he dozed away after a few minutes, and we stole off, leaving him stretched on his cot, enjoying a repose which I trust will give him energy to meet the long slumber which must soon follow."

"It was rather late last night," I said, "when I visited the same person, and then he did not feel sleepy."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed; "that's, you see, just as I said. But I'll bet my life he's asleep yet."

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"You are not Dr. Strong's assistant?" I inquired.
The Doctor was the physician of Radmar prison. Still
from the dress and appearance of my new acquaintance,
who seemed, however, to be rather an intelligent
person, I would scarcely have taken him to be in any
way connected with the medical faculty.

"Oh! not at all," he replied, with a quiet smile. In
a kind of confidential way he continued: "I'm not in
that line—my *line* is quite the other way. I am in a
manner professionally connected with this establish-
ment. I seldom have to come here officially, perhaps
not more than once or so every half year; but when I
come, 'tis to give my patients *drops* of a different kind
from any the doctor has to give. He tries to prolong
life; my duty is to shorten it. I deal exclusively with
the throat in this way"—

Here he pulled from a capacious side-pocket of his
coat a rope, and, while holding the looped end of it
near his neck, he lifted the other end above his head,
as if to hitch it to a beam, and by this pantomime gave
me to understand that I was in the dread presence of—
the executioner.

The occupant of cell number 39 was still sleeping
when the jailer turned the heavy key in the door. I
thought it almost a sin to disturb him who was reposing
so calmly. There was actually a smile on his face. He
was perhaps dreaming of home and of his days of inno-
cence. Memory may have led him back to childhood,
and his mother might have returned to cheer him again
with words of love and affection. What a pleasing
reality such a dream might have been to him, but what
a dreadful reality must come with his waking! I never
felt so unmanned as when witnessing this temporary
return of happiness, soon, alas! to be replaced by the
darkest despair. How cruel to rob him of these golden
moments of life and hope, in order to let him see the

scaffold and the standard of death fluttering over it in the morning air! The avenging law must, however, take its course!

The jailer gave him, I thought, rather a rude shake. He awoke, the smile still on his face, but in a moment this faded away and was replaced by a solemn expression which overspread his countenance. Still he was not dismayed. Without a moment's hesitation he sprang from the bed, fully dressed. Not a nerve trembled. He appeared to be as calm as any one could be, and, seizing my hand, he asked me with quick words, "How long have I to live?"

The jailer answered, "About half an hour or so."
"Half an hour! Why, we have lots of time!" he exclaimed.

He then sat on the side of the bed, and placing his hand to his forehead, said thoughtfully, "Let me see,—Aye, you keep that,"—and he handed me a book on "Divine Forgiveness!" which he had been reading.

"Here is your book," he continued. "If the quality of mercy and forgiveness is so necessary in the character of a Divine Being, ought it not to a certain extent be indispensable to exalt and perfect the character of man? In my case man is unforgiving, a tyrant in authority who seeks to deprive me of a life which he can never restore. Were I a greater criminal than I have been pronounced, still I should not be left beyond the range of mercy. In my case, your law, an imperfect tribunal, has declared me guilty of an offence which I never committed,"—[he had been convicted of forgery on what was considered by many very insufficient evidence,]—"and for this I am about to forfeit my life. Good God! now, indeed, I can tell the value of it. But I am not afraid to die. The disgrace will be but temporary, for after I am gone, though it be for years, be assured that justice will be done to my memory."

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Springing up, he exclaimed in a petulant manner,
"This is too bad; but let us hurry it over—I am
ready."

. We were about to leave the cell in order to enter the
apartment in which the executioner stood waiting to
bind his arms, when the door was suddenly pushed
open, and there stood the sheriff and a number of per-
sons in the hall. What could this interruption mean?
The sheriff was a most considerate man, and would not
needlessly make his appearance at such a time. There
was, however, a smile on his face, instead of the serious
expression which one would then expect to see im-
pressed on the features of the chief executive officer,
and laying his hand familiarly on the shoulders of the
condemned man, said:—

"My good lad, I have brought something for you!"

"What!" exclaimed the person addressed, as if in
doubt of the meaning of the words.

"See here," continued the sheriff, holding out a large
official letter, "I have but just received this document,
and this," said he, emphatically, "is the happiest mo-
ment of my life. Here is your pardon, and you are
now—a free man! How wretched I should feel if any
accident had delayed this until it was too late!"

The tears filled the sheriff's eyes as he spoke. The
pardoned man stood for a few moments looking at him
with incredulous surprise, and then, as if overcome by
a sudden rush of feeling, he sat again on the side of the
bed, covered his face with his hands, and wept like a
child.*

The fullest evidence had been unexpectedly obtained
that he was completely innocent. Congratulations soon
followed. A number of friends rushed in to grasp his
hand which was now cold and trembling. Such a scene!

* A true incident.

Not a dry eye could be seen. Tears were the generous offering which Humanity then yielded to Mercy. On such an occasion the most hardened sinner would feel the touch of penitence. Draconian retribution and retaliation have made men look upon the gibbet with indifference, and shout defiance even in the presence of death. The soft whisper of clemency has melted the most stubborn heart. Would that there was more clemency in the world!

Through the kindness of some friends a carriage was in waiting, and in a short time I and others who accompanied the liberated man, were beyond the prison walls. Before we left, I saw the executioner talking to some persons who had come to see him perform his odious duty. A look of disappointment was plainly on his face, and it seemed to me that he was not the only one we left behind us who shared his feelings, and who would have preferred to have had the law take its vindictive course, and give to the public another brutal exhibition of the taking of human life and another—"Roman holiday."

CHAPTER XXI.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

Though ninety-nine men out of a hundred should tell me that the law is justified in enforcing the penalty of death for certain offences, I as unhesitatingly deny the right of any body of men to legislate to such an extent as to authorize a criminal to be deprived of life, no matter how atrocious may be his guilt. The sacredness of human life has never yet been fully recognized by legislators; and when the law seeks vengeance by capital punishment, some reckless individuals, following

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the pernicious example, have, when wronged or aggra-
 vated, considered themselves also justified in taking the
 law into their own hands and slaying their aggressor. It
 is only when one is forced to take the life of a brutal
 assailant, in order to save his own or that of another,
 can such a necessity be at all recognized. Men, it is
 said, think in herds. Few will dare to discountenance
 prevalling public sentiment be it ever so unreasonable.
 That sentiment is often as wavering as the wind, and
 as frequently wrong as to what is moral or immoral,
 criminal or innocent. Offences which were counted
 capital at one period, are now scarcely recognized as
 misdemeanors, and much of what was esteemed proper,
 moral, and religious in olden times, or even when our
 grandfathers were boys, would now be set down as
 actual depravity. Humanity will be outraged as long
 as the decision of Justice is guided by Jewish texts.

A few years ago, that "sum of all villainies," the
 slave trade, was upheld in England as being a most
 enterprising and respectable calling, and strictly within
 the bounds of morality and religion. Right Reverend
 Bishops in the House of Lords, preachers on public plat-
 forms, and popular men of every degree, defended the
 infamous traffic, and gave abundant Scriptural authority
 in support of its legality and practice, and in the face of
 some doubting humanitarian would reiterate the texts—
 "Both thy bond-men and thy bond-maids which thou
 shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about
 you; of them ye shall buy bond-men and bond-maids."
 —"Moreover of the children of the strangers that do
 sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their
 families that are with you, which they begat in your
 land; and they shall be your possession." "And ye
 shall take them as an inheritance for your children after
 you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your
 bond-men forever."

These and similar passages were freely quoted to silence those who had the temerity to speak or write against the popular and money-making slave-trade.— Reverend gentlemen and pious rich men throughout the kingdom were slave owners, and accumulated vast wealth by the seizure and sale of helpless men, women, and children, and when a text in contradiction to texts favoring the infamous traffic was given, such as, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death,"—when a text of this kind was hurled by men of humanity at men stealers, the clergy and the commentators easily explained it away.

The great revivalist, the Rev. George Whitfield, owned slaves, and wrote in his journal—"Blessed be God for the increase of the negroes—I am determined to take no more orphans into the orphan house till I can buy more negroes."

The Rev. John Newton, another great evangelical preacher, once commanded a slave ship, and traded in slaves on the coast of Africa, and he wrote—"No employment ever afforded greater advantages to an awakened mind than the command of a slave ship; and while engaged in this horrible business he said that he "experienced sweeter and more frequent hours of Divine communion than he had ever elsewhere known. He had also been the overseer of a slave barracoon on the Gold Coast, and subsequently a partner in a slave dealing firm. What consternation now would follow were some great evangelical preacher at the present time to express such sentiments! Here it will be admitted that there were two very eminent Christian ministers, who, like others of their class, upheld the slave trade during their lives, and saw nothing immoral in what is now asserted to be infamous.

After the Reformation, Christian ministers, including

passages were freely quoted to the temerity to speak or write of money-making slave-trade.—and pious rich men throughout owners, and accumulated vast wealth, and sale of helpless men, women, and children, a text in contradiction to texts that traffic was given, such as, "He that selleth him, or if he be found sold, shall surely be put to death,"—when a text is quoted by men of humanity at men and the commentators easily ex-

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Newton, another great evangelical, owned a slave ship, and traded in the West Indies, and he wrote—"No doubt I should have had greater advantages to an African company than the command of a slave ship;" this horrible business he said that he had more frequent hours of labor than he had ever elsewhere known." The overseer of a slave barracoen on the coast, subsequently a partner in a slave-trade, and a consternation now would follow the evangelical preacher at the present time! Here it will be admitted that two very eminent Christian ministers of their class, upheld the slave-trade, and saw nothing immoral in it to be infamous.

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many of the leading Protestant reformers, saw nothing immoral in joining in certain "lawful sports" after church time on the Sabbath day, such as "dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsunales, Morris-dances, and the setting up of May-poles." Some years later an agitation was got up against the so-called "lawful games," and such "pastime and recreation" were pronounced by Puritans and other strict observers of the Jewish law, "desecrations of the Sabbath, and highly sinful and immoral." A majority of Protestant ministers are still of this opinion, and are still making strenuous but evidently ineffectual efforts to prevent Sunday excursions, and the opening to the public of libraries, museums, and art galleries on the Sabbath; while the clergy of the Church of Rome, almost as an entire body, see no impropriety in such recreation or indulgence, or even in the prohibited "lawful games."

In Old Testament times most of the patriarchs were polygamists, and polygamy was not then counted an immorality; and we read that the "people of God" in those remote days had the sanction—some tell us it was but the "connivance"—of the Almighty for such indulgence, and for acts of blood-shedding and barbarity, which would now be pronounced brutal and criminal in the greatest degree. How widely different is public sentiment on subjects at the present period! The fact is, conventionalism, social rules and customs, have perhaps done as much to establish certain codes of morality as we find regulated by the authority of any particular standard. Though the decrees in the Old Testament made certain offences punishable with death, yet notwithstanding our severe Orthodoxy we are not governed by such edicts, they being considered at this distance of time repulsive to the humanity of the age, and fearfully vindictive and implacable. We read that by a Divine ordinance, "Whosoever doeth any work on

the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death." "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death." He that cursed without the camp was ordered to be put to death. Death was the penalty for cursing a father or a mother. A witch was to be put to death; and the same fearful penalty was exacted for other offences which would now be scarcely deemed criminal. It would be simply impossible in this more enlightened age to enforce decrees so barbarous and inhuman. Even Dr. Clarke, the commentator, who had so high a veneration for Scriptural authority, ventures to make the following remarks on this subject:—"As punishments should be ever proportioned to crimes, so the highest punishment, due to the highest crime, should not be inflicted for a minor offence—then the infliction of this punishment (death) for any minor offence is injustice and cruelty, and serves only to confound the claims of justice, and to render the profligate desperate."

Those who would now abolish the death penalty as conflicting with the most advanced views of benevolence and humanity, and as being an unjustifiable act of vindictive cruelty engendering brutality in the minds of others, are triumphantly pointed to the texts which say "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."—"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall surely be put to death."—"He that killeth a man, shall surely be put to death." The advocates for the continuation of the death penalty, quote these as authority for law-makers to deprive a culprit of life; yet these advocates must not overlook the fact that there is another text, even one of the commandments, which forbids the taking of life:—"Thou shalt not kill;" nor must they forget that Cain, the first murderer, was exempted by the Almighty from such a penalty. Although the Lord told him that, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground," yet

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he was permitted to live as "a fugitive and a vagabond
in the earth;" and, even desirous of protecting him, the
Lord furthermore said—"Therefore whosoever slayeth
Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven fold."
King David was virtually the murderer of Uriah, yet
the crime was, it may be said, in a manner overlooked.

Those who contend that the law is just and proper
which would direct a man's life to be taken for the com-
mission of certain grave offences, must also remember
that life was taken, as has been shown, for minor
offences, or for crimes which none but savages would
now attempt to punish with death. No crime is worth
a death. He who wantonly and deliberately takes the
life of another, should of course be severely punished;
he should be compelled to labor for the benefit of those
whom he has deprived of a protector and provider, or
for the benefit of the community. Apart from other
considerations, it is shocking to learn that many inno-
cent lives have been taken and are still taken under
the authority of law; and, while our present enactments
are in force, such deplorable and irremediable occur-
rences may take place again and again. After an apparent
fair trial, and upon what may be accepted as the clearest
evidence, conviction may follow, and when too late it
may be discovered that some guiltless creature has been
sacrificed. If for no higher motive would it not be
better, as a matter of humane precaution, that the death
sentence of ninety-nine criminals should be commuted,
rather than that the possibility should exist of having
an innocent man executed?

The holocausts which have followed national and
religious disputes can never be correctly enumerated
and described. Blood needlessly shed has fertilized
the earth in every quarter of the world. Until but a
few years past, great crimes and petty crimes alike were
expiated by death. Death for political offences, many

of which were far from being treasonable; death for heterodoxy; death for non-conformity; death for forgery and for counterfeiting; death for burglary, for robbery, and for larceny; death for horse-stealing, and for sheep-stealing, and the same dread penalty was inflicted for numerous other offences now hardly counted misdemeanors. In those Draconian times, when what was called "*mercy*," was extended, it was generally on condition of forfeiting an eye or a limb, and the result of such clemency was, that fearfully mutilated and destitute creatures were seen crawling, or hobbling, and begging along the public highways as a terror to evil doers, and as dread examples of the retributive justice of a Christian nation.

About two hundred years ago there were, we learn, more than two hundred and fifty crimes or offences for which punishment of death was inflicted in England. The common law inflicted death on every felon who could not read. When we find so many of the British peasantry who, at the present day, cannot read, or can hardly tell one letter from another, we may be able to form an opinion of how sanguinary the law must have been at a period when English laborers were much more ignorant than they are even at present. The advocates for the abolition of capital punishment are, however, still met with the reply that the "weight of authority" is yet in favor of the death penalty, but those who make this reply, ought not to forget that there was a time, scarcely more than a hundred years ago, when a greater "weight of authority"—the inhuman fiat of rulers, legislators, and judges—was in favor of extirpating, after the fashion of the most vindictive barbarians, almost every offender.

In the story of "Robert Ainsleigh," we get a description of "A London Street Scene in 1758." It says:—"I inquired of a neighbor where all these people are going? I suppose they are going to see the execution

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to-morrow,' he answered civilly. 'An execution?'
'Yes, three brothers—mere lads, who are to be hung
to-morrow.' 'And it is now six in the evening. Do
you mean to tell me that this rabble will wait for four-
teen hours, standing in an open street, for the brief
delight of seeing three of their fellow-creatures hung?'
'Not only this rabble, Sir, but the finest gentlemen in
the town. There is not a window within view of the
gallows where you will not see bloods drinking and
gaming. 'Tis said that Mr. Relwyn, the wit, has a suit
of black on purpose for executions!' 'And pray, Sir,
what is the crime of these unfortunates? Is it murder,
arson, or forgery, for which they are to suffer?' 'No,
Sir, the lads are somewhat to be commiserated. Their
sole offence is the appropriation of three oak saplings,
which they severally cut and converted into walking-
sticks while enjoying a ramble in a copse at Edgware.
The law for the protection of timber is somewhat
stringent.'"

An execution at the present day for such an offence
would be shocking to all but the veriest barbarians, and
it is significant to learn that in a case where a person
was charged with one of the greatest offences known
to the law, a British Judge could take into account the
cruel provocation given to the prisoner, and interfere
in a humane but most extraordinary manner with the
course of justice generally pursued. A case of this
kind has been lately reported and published in the
newspapers as follows:—

"A SCENE AT THE CHESTER ASSIZES.

"An occurrence perhaps without a parallel, was wit-
nessed at the close of the Assizes at Chester, (England,)
of which the following account is given in a local paper:
Mary Lancaster, 33, was indicted for the manslaughter
of her husband, John Lancaster, at Birkenhead. The
deceased had led the prisoner a wretched life, and

on the 13th of September he came home drunk and kicked over the meat which she was preparing for his dinner. He then thrashed her, and in a passion the prisoner threw at him a sharpening steel and caused his death. The prisoner was a hard-working woman, and in spite of her husband's brutal treatment of her had done her very best to make his home comfortable. The jury found the prisoner guilty. Mr. Justice Brett, addressing the prisoner, then said: 'I believe if I thought it right to act according to your own feelings, I should say nothing of this unhappy husband of yours. As far as I can see, you were a respectable, hard-working, well-behaved wife, and I feel bound to say a greater brute than your husband was I have seldom heard of. There are circumstances in the depositions even worse than those which have been brought forward. They show that, even on the very last day you were together, you were doing all you could to make his home comfortable and to make him happy. With a brutality which made me shudder when I read it, he cast away that which you had prepared for him. He has been beating and ill-treating you for months, probably for years, and it is nothing but the tenderness and forgiveness of the woman and wife which prevented you from having him punished for crimes he committed against you time after time. It is only when he had driven you to desperation by ill-treating you again, that you, in a moment of passion, took up a weapon and threw it at him, I believe, without the intention of striking him. It did strike him, and you immediately ran for assistance, and did all you could to save him. All the real right to this case was on your side—all the real wrong on your husband's; and God forbid that I should punish you! I will be no party to it. I will not make this judgment complete. I will not allow it to be said by anybody that you are a convicted felon—[hear.

came home drunk and was preparing for his, and in a passion the ening steel and caused a hard-working woman, brutal treatment of her his home comfortable. Mr. Justice Brett, said: 'I believe if I g to your own feelings, happy husband of yours. respectable, hard-work- I feel bound to say a and was I have seldom ances in the depositions have been brought for- on the very last day you all you could to make make him happy. With dder when I read it, he prepared for him. He g you for months, prob- g but the tenderness and wife which prevented for crimes he committed It is only when he had ill-treating you again, that n, took up a weapon and without the intention of im, and you immediately l you could to save him. was on your side—all the ; and God forbid that I no party to it. I will not . I will not allow it to be a convicted felon—[hear.

hear!]—for a conviction is not complete until a sentence is passed, and I mean to pass no sentence at all. [Loud cheering, which for some time the officials of the Court vainly endeavored to suppress.] I shall merely ask you to enter into your own recognizance to come up for judgment if called upon, and nobody in the world will ever call upon you—God forbid they ever should!— [Renewed cheering, during which the prisoner left the dock.]”

The distinguished John Bright, member of the British Parliament, and lately one of the Imperial Ministers of the Crown, in a letter to an American friend on the subject of capital punishment, wrote:—

“JOHN BRIGHT ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

“I do not think the punishment of death is necessary to the security and well-being of society; and I believe its total abolition would not tend to increase those crimes which it is now supposed by many to prevent. The security and well-being of society do not depend upon the severity of punishments. Barbarism in the law promotes barbarism among those subject to the law; and acts of cruelty under the law become examples of similar acts done contrary to law. The real security for human life is to be found in a reverence for it. If the law regarded it as inviolable, then the people would begin also so to regard it. A deep reverence for human life is worth more than a thousand executions in the prevention of murder, and is, in fact, the great security for human life. The law of capital punishment, while pretending to support this reverence, does, in fact, tend to destroy it. If the death penalty is of any force in any case to deter from crime, it is of much more force in lessening our chief security against it, for it proclaims the fact that Kings, Parliament, Judges, and Juries, may determine when and how men may be

put to death by violence, and familiarity with this idea cannot strengthen the reverence for human life. To put men to death for crimes, civil or political, is to give proof of weakness rather than strength, and of barbarism rather than Christian civilization. If the United States could get rid of the gallows, it would not stand long here. One by one we 'Americanize' our institutions, and I hope, in all that is good, we may not be unwilling to follow you."

And to Prof. Newman and others who wrote to him on the same subject, he replied:—

"I beg to thank you for sending me your article on death punishments. I take your view on this subject. I believe with a different mode of punishment we should have fewer murders, and therefore life would be more secure. I have from time to time read all that has been urged on both sides of this question, and am convinced that those who are against capital punishment outreason their opponents. I understand that a bill is to be brought into the House in the course of the next session for the abolition of the death penalty. Should that be the case, I shall have pleasure in voting for it, as I have done on former occasions.' In the second letter Mr. Bright expresses a wish that the public attention should be roused on the question. 'I believe,' he goes on to say, 'Mr. J. W. Pease, M. P. for South Durham, will bring the subject before Parliament during the coming session. As for my views upon it, I have always condemned our law in regard to it as un-Christian and unphilosophical, and have spoken upon it, in that sense, in the House of Commons. If you can turn to the second volume of my published speeches, you will find, under date of May 3, 1864, what I said on capital punishment in one of the debates on Mr. Ewart's motion for their abolition. I wish our pro-

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fessed Christian writers were as Christian as you are
on this sad subject. The hangings of the past few
weeks have been shocking to me, and I marvel at the
insensibility of my countrymen.'"

How many of those in authority have been deaf to
entreaties for clemency, and have failed to exercise
their prerogative of mercy by "seasoning justice."
Monarchs and Governors have been too often monsters
of cruelty. It is said that during thirty-eight years of
the reign of that pious and exemplary Defender of the
Faith, King Henry VIII., 72,000 executions took place
in England for crimes less than murder, and, when
those for that offence were added, the average during
his reign was six executions a day, Sunday included.
From statistical information we also learn that between
the years from 1820 to 1830, 797 criminals were executed
in England alone; and that during the last fifty years
1461 persons have been executed in France. It is im-
possible to tell how many of these unfortunates were
undeserving of death, or how many of them perished
even while being innocent. Howard in his day did a
vast and blessed work of philanthropy in mitigating the
condition of prisoners of every degree. He secured more
humane treatment for the condemned, and obtained
pardon for many who had been unjustly accused. Not
only were the places of confinement in England visited,
but his benevolent intentions obtained for him permis-
sion to enter and inspect prisons in most of the principal
countries of Europe, and he did much for the alleviation
of convicts who had scarcely another friend. Other
Howards are still required. Though prisons have been
made more habitable, and their rules and regulations
much improved, there is however reason to believe that
in many places those who have control of prisons and
penitentiaries are not sufficiently considerate for the
wants of those in their custody; even cases of great

cruelty towards prisoners are occasionally made public. The lash, even in Great Britain, is still resorted to as the most effectual punishment for certain crimes. Its use we learn has been abolished in the army and in the navy. Martinets were ever ready to inflict this degrading chastisement for even slight offences, until public feeling was aroused against flagellation. The lash is still used in some of the States of the American Union, and in other countries for petty felonies, and even for minor offences. The advocates for this barbarous punishment will say, "Put yourself in the place of the person who has been injured, or whose wife or daughter has been insulted, and see what your mode of revenge would be." We all know that if injured persons were allowed to take their own revenge, shocking atrocities would be committed. The law therefore dictates what the punishment as well as the deterrent shall be.

In former times, when the offence was not sufficiently grave to allow the taking of life, it was often adjudged that the culprit should lose an eye, an ear, a nose, an arm, or a leg. Barbarous mutilation was then thought to be the proper punishment and preventative. As a preventative such infliction would even to-day act as a greater deterrent to low sensual crimes than the lash itself; but again public feeling would properly revolt against such cruelty. Flagellation as punishment is simply brutality; it degrades and hardens the criminal, and too often makes him reckless and desperate in his subsequent revenge on the community; it gives a shock to the humane and finer feelings of our nature, vitiating public sentiment, and, after all, it is not more efficacious than would be the daily *public exposure*, for a certain time, of the offender, in the pillory or the stocks as well as exposures at hard labor. It is believed that certain criminals would prefer even the lash in private, to daily public exposure before all. While in confinement, the

occasionally made public. In, is still resorted to as for certain crimes. Its ed in the army and in the ady to inflict this degrad- ight offences, until public flagellation. The lash is s of the American Union, ty felonies, and even for es for this barbarous pun- self in the place of the or whose wife or daughter at your mode of revenge t if injured persons were enge, shocking atrocities w therefore dictates what e deterrent shall be.

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meanest prisoner should be induced to improve his mind in order to correct moral obliquities, and only low but sufficient diet should be the prison allowance. As a punishment, and as a preventative, *public exposure* would be in every way as effective as the lash, and certainly more in accordance with the advanced and humane ideas of the present age.

Crime must be punished; there must be a proper atonement for every wilful breach of the law, but the penalty of *death* for any offence is barbarous and an outrage on humanity. May such penalty soon be abolished forever!*

The world's great poet must have felt that it was wrong to take human life when he wrote—on the abuse of authority:—

"O, it is excellent to have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous To use it like a giant.

And on mercy:—

"Alas! alas! Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He which is the top of judgment should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made."

* A religious paper—"The Methodist" of New York—not long ago published a most barbarous approval of legal murder. In 1876, a man named Dolan, who, it is presumed, was a Roman Catholic was charged with the murder of a Mr. Noe and executed for the alleged offence. Upon this "The Methodist" remarked: "The man Dolan hung at the Tombs in this city last week belonged to a class that we have no better use for than hanging them. We have scruples about hanging men on circumstantial evidence and if a man has any character, as for example Rubenstein has, we should strenuously favor other modes of punishment. The Dolans are professional enemies of society. They kill us when they get a chance and have a motive. We should hang them as we shoot wolves whenever we get a chance. We do not know whether Mr. Dolan killed Mr. Noe nor do we care. He had probably though only twenty-two years old, killed other men, and if he had lived would certainly have gone on killing. We ought to hang every Friday at the Tombs as many Dolans as the officers could dispose of. It is terribly unsafe living

"According to the statistics published by the Howard Association, the number of capital sentences executed in proportion to those pronounced is steadily decreasing. During the ten years between 1870 and 1879, inclusive, only 16 persons were executed out of 608 condemned to death in Austria, 93 out of 198 in France, 125 out of 291 in Spain, 6 out of 46 in Sweden and Norway, 1 out of 94 in Denmark, 7 out of 249 in Bavaria, and only one out of 484 in North Germany. In the United States during the same period there have been about 2,500 convictions for murder and only 200 executions, half of which were applications of "lynch law." In Australia and New Zealand, 458 persons have been condemned to death and only 130 executed. In England and Wales, 2,005 persons have been tried for murder during the thirty years between 1850 and 1879, and of this number 665, or 33 per cent., have been sentenced to death, and 372, or 19 per cent., executed. During the last twenty years, 66 persons had been sentenced to death in Ireland, and 36 executed; while in Scotland there have been 15 executions out of 40 capital sentences within the same period. Capital punishment has been abolished in Holland since 1870, and according to the statistics of the Howard Association there have been only 17 murders committed since then, as against 19 in the previous period of ten years. Capital punishment is practically abolished in Portugal, Roumania, and Belgium, as it also is in several of the

in the city with them at large; and we never met an enthusiast whose fanaticism embraced an expectation of the reformation of the Dolans."

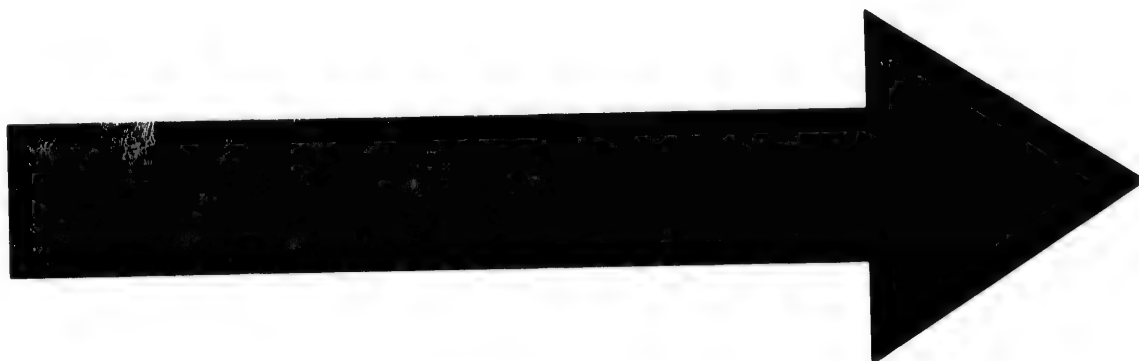
Upon this specimen of Methodist humanity, the New York Sun remarks: "We do not know whether Dolan killed Noe or not *nor do we care!* What sort of law and justice does this uphold? It is really shocking to read such language in a religious journal. It is a fearful responsibility deliberately to take the life of a human being who is wholly within our power. No matter how bad that life has been, to take it away may well inspire us with awe and horror. If capital punishment be a necessity, it is the most dreadful of all necessities."

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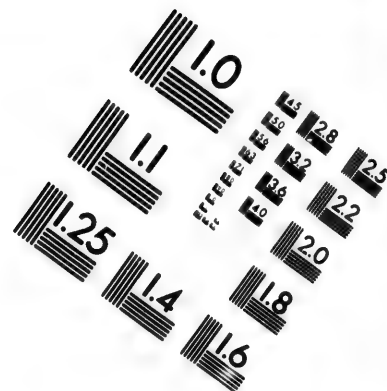
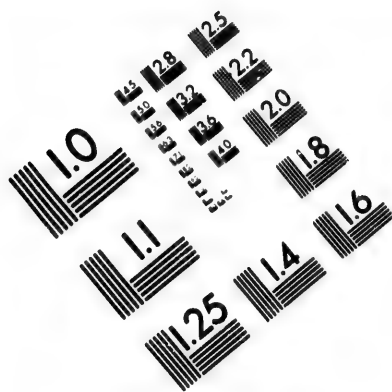
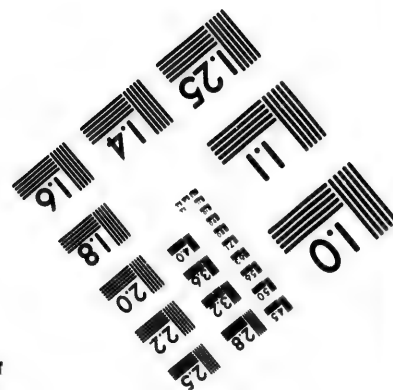
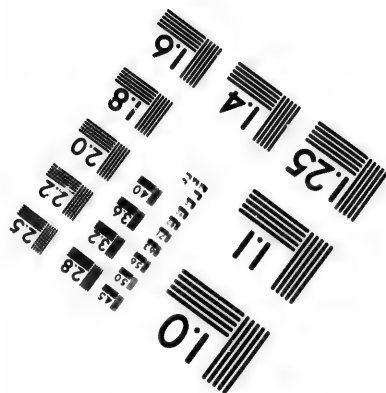
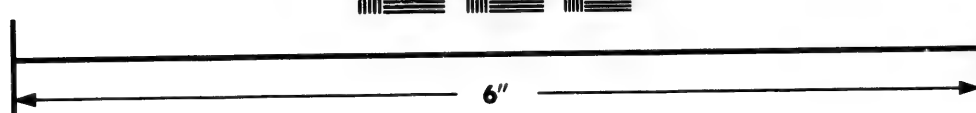
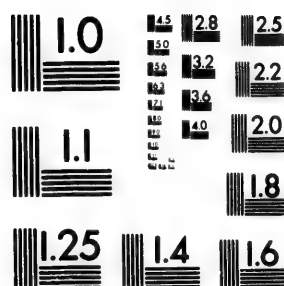


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States of America; but it is to be noted that the application of lynch law is more frequent in these States—such as Michigan and Rhode Island—than in those where the punishment of death is still inflicted.”—(Toronto Globe of May 27, 1881.)

CHAPTER XXII.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

In these days of so-called advanced ideas, men of deep thought and great learning assure us that much of what we have been led to believe to be pure truth, is in reality nothing but fiction. This, they say, is especially the case regarding theology. Old notions are being rudely upset, and we find persons who while busily engaged in endeavors to liberate and exalt the human mind from what they assert to be the erroneous teachings of the past, are at the same time actually attempting to improve the character of the Deity, and rescue it from the unworthy attributes said to have been attached to it by the majority of pious doctors and professors of theology.

The thought is startling to many. What! Is it possible that weak and fallible man should have the temerity to cast a reflection on that august Nature which has so long been pointed to as perfection? But I suppose all that we can ever know of the character or disposition of the Supreme, beyond what we can learn from the great book of Nature, is that which is revealed to us in the Bible and in other inspired writings; and our surprise will be increased when we find that the preachers and clergy of some of the most influential

denominations tell us in effect that the Scriptures do not mean what they say, when they intimate that God is subject to the same passions as man—that he is changeable, envious, jealous, angry, and vindictive,—even when in text after text we read—“And it repented God that he had made man”—“For I the Lord thy God, am a jealous God”—“For I have kindled a fire in mine anger”—“I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy;” and furthermore many now assert that God is not revengeful, though we find it recorded, “The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God.”—“Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone”—“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them which know not God”—“But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”—“And shall cast them (the wicked) into a furnace of fire”—“And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb”—“Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”—“The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they shall have no rest day nor night”—“I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh”—“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision”—“The righteous shall also see, and fear, and shall laugh at him.”

These and many other dreadful passages throughout the Bible assure us first, That there is a hell called the “bottomless pit,” the “furnace of fire,” the “lake of fire,” in which condemned sinners are to be ever tormented by means of “fire and brimstone.” Secondly, That the fearful infliction is to be “everlasting”—“for ever and ever,” the fire being “unquenchable.” Thirdly, That this fierce torment is to take place in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, and that the Almighty shall rejoice over the

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Nothing, therefore, within the covers of the Bible can be more clearly established than the doctrine of Divine vengeance and eternal punishment. With numerous texts of this character before them, how can men professing a belief in Divine revelation, ignore such fulminations and declare that they do not mean what they say, or that the passages are mistranslations or interpolations? Still certain professors of theology and learned doctors of divinity either assert that such is the case, or by some peculiar exegetical process they deduce some other explanation sufficient to neutralize the condemnatory meaning to their own satisfaction.

Were it necessary, the numerous comments of certain individual members and clergy of some of the strictest sects could be quoted to prove that the leaven of heterodoxy with regard to eternal punishment has already caused much contention in the churches, and that conferences, and synods, and other ministerial convocations, have been assembled to call to account certain erring shepherds, and to advocate their expulsion as being teachers dangerous to faith and morals, simply, and perhaps mostly because, under a humane impulse—one implanted by Nature or by the Creator—they cannot believe that the Almighty made and prepared a hell of fire and brimstone in which unpardoned sinners—the creatures whom he made—shall be tormented forever and ever, while He and the saints look on to deride and laugh, to mock when their fear cometh, and to rejoice at their calamity!

“Brother,” said one of our distinguished preachers to me a short time ago, “it is rumored that among others you have ventured to express a doubt regarding the doctrine of eternal punishment. This you know is one of our leading tenets, which our people will insist on,—

one which if you give up must destroy your influence and usefulness among Methodists. The matter has been mentioned to me; not yet, however, as an open complaint; I have been merely asked to caution you."

I looked at him for a moment, and without waiting for any reply he continued:—

"I am aware that many of the most distinguished Protestant divines of the present day secretly reject the idea of a benevolent Deity having provided a Hell for the everlasting torture of the fallible beings he has created, just as strongly as most of the old Protestant reformers denounced the idea of Purgatory or even universal salvation. I say they do this secretly, for few even among the boldest have yet had the temerity to strike openly at a doctrine which, strange to say, is held to be compatible with divine benignity and worthy of credence by thousands who nevertheless exultingly proclaim with the psalmist that the mercy of God endureth forever. How reluctantly some give up old beliefs, even a belief in Hell! To many this belief is now impossible. Is it so with you, brother? Be plain with me as I shall be so with you."

We were alone, and my friend spoke in a low, confidential tone, which somehow led me to suspect that he himself had probably some misgivings regarding a doctrine so particularly prominent in the affirmative teaching of our own Society, as well as among nearly all others classed as dissenters. I must say that I was a little surprised, or rather taken aback by the question, and I hesitated to make a reply.

"Speak out," continued he, encouragingly, "your silence certifies as to your doubt. It may be a step out of a delusion."

"Have you a doubt on the subject?" I asked.

"I have," he replied, "and one that I am confident will not lead to despair, but rather to the delightful

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n the subject?" I asked. , "and one that I am confident ir, but rather to the delightful

hope that as God is merciful all shall be saved. I will be candid with you," said he, lowering his voice, "and, though you and others may not have suspected it, for years back I could not conscientiously preach the theological perdition of sinners. To do so would be most repulsive to my feelings. I could not, and believe, as I do believe, in divine forgiveness and mercy."*

"Then what of the numerous texts relating to eternal punishment?" I asked.

"They are simply conflicting texts like many others in the Bible," he replied. "No matter what may or may not have been asserted as to the harmony of Biblical statements, or to the unity of idea in the Scriptures, still there are positive contradictions which our best commentators find it impossible to reconcile. For instance: Take one case out of a large number of incompatible statements. We are told most emphatically that 'No man hath seen God at any time,'—'Whom no man hath seen or can see,'—'Ye have neither heard his voice, at any time, nor seen his shape,'—'And he said, Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.' Now these texts plainly declare that none have ever seen God, or even heard his voice; yet, in the same inspired Book, we learn that Adam *heard* his voice in the garden; that 'the Lord spake to Moses face to face'; Jacob, after a night of wrestling with a man, an angel, or the Lord, declares, 'I have seen God face to face.' Regarding this extraordinary scene, we are informed by a commentator in his Biblical notes, that 'This narrative has so great difficulties that the ablest commentators are divided whether to consider it as a simple matter of

* A distinguished D. D. of a Presbyterian College informed the writer not long ago that he "had not preached Hell for the last twenty years." Subsequently two other ministers of the same denomination made a similar statement.

fact or as a prophetic vision.' Others have tried to explain away the enigma by saying that Jacob's wrestling must be taken 'in a moral sense as an act of ardent prayer.' Be this as it may, we have one notable instance in which the Lord, the Almighty himself, was heard, and seen, and touched, an instance so plain that it leaves no room whatever for commentators to doubt or to twist the narrative to suit any preconceived idea hostile to the anthropomorphism of the Deity. In the 18th chapter of Genesis, we find that 'The Lord appeared unto (Abraham) on the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.' The account states that 'Three men stood by him; and when he saw them he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.' 'And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away I pray thee from thy servant.' We are then informed that after these visitors had had their feet washed, and had partaken of milk, butter, veal, and cakes, the Lord inquired for Sarah, Abraham's wife, and promised that though she was 'well-stricken in age,' she should have a son. The Lord further spoke concerning Sodom, and intimated his intention as to the destruction of that wicked city; and that, upon the repeated pleading of Abraham, he consented to spare the place, provided that even ten righteous persons could be found therein.

"This Scriptural account of the personal visit of the Almighty to Abraham precludes the possibility of the denial of Jehovah having appeared in human form, of having travelled and rested, eaten and drank. Regarding this wonderful visit, a commentator simply remarks: 'The fact is, we live under a dispensation so different, and in a period so remote from the age of miracles, that it is difficult for us to form a tolerable idea of these events; and many impertinent question

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have been asked to which the Scriptures furnish no answer, and therefore it is our duty to be silent. Thus far we know that the Deity is capable of assuming any created form, and of communicating any form to creatures, either permanent or temporary.' See Commentary in Cottage Bible.

"The commentator evidently felt the difficulty under which he labored in giving any explanation of this singular interview between the Lord and Abraham, and of the entertainment of the august visitor by the patriarch, and was no doubt desirous of making no further remarks regarding a narrative which has been so perplexing to the clergy. But while we are recommended 'to be silent,' we are forced to admit that we are in this account furnished with one of the most remarkable contradictions to be found in the inspired Word.

"I have been astonished," continued my friend, "at the unquestioning credulity of some of our members, even of many of our preachers, respecting this relation of the meeting at Mamre. They will not admit that there is a conflicting statement in the Bible, and that what appears to be so is simply in consequence of our sinful inability to understand the sacred narrative. They boldly assert that our reasoning powers are totally incapable of dealing with the mysterious teachings of the Almighty, and, like the commentator, they tell us that with such Divine matters 'it is our duty to be silent.' Must there be no protest against the insanity of extravagant belief?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONFLICTING TEACHERS.

It is well known that the increasing number of those who are hostile to the claims of Christianity always assert that if the Scriptures were truly inspired, their different parts would be harmonious instead of conflicting, and that no statement in the Bible could contravene any other statement whatever in the same book. These charges are now calmly made by men—and by women, too—eminent for their learning and ability, and the Christian Church is at present agitated in every direction in order to refute opponents against whose motives no slanderous reproach or accusation need be attempted.

That there are, or seem to be, Biblical contradictions, must be admitted. To satisfy myself on this head, I made it a duty to examine the texts or narratives alleged to be at variance, and I must acknowledge that the discovery of many of such discrepancies caused me much uneasiness, the best commentators which I consulted affording me no satisfactory explanation. When failing in this respect, I furthermore made it a point to ask for an interpretation of these Scriptural difficulties from some of our oldest leading preachers, and while a few admitted that they held doubts themselves on the points adverted to, others almost reproached me for my inquisitive spirit, merely telling me that there was sufficient in the Bible for my instruction, and that to question the validity of any part of God's word because my frail reason failed to comprehend what was written therein, was simply a proof of man's innate sinfulness and presumption. Finally, I was told that I was placing

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the eternal interest of my soul in jeopardy by indulging in the prying but wicked curiosity too prevalent in these degenerate days.

Alas! thought I, if I cannot understand these incomprehensible passages, to what extent were the Scriptures written for our information?

In further conversation with my friend on the subject of Biblical contradictions and interpolations, I remarked that these, while engendering mistrust in the minds of those who would fain remain steadfast, gave the opposers of our religion one of their strongest arguments against the validity of our faith. "Even now," I said, "there are actually sceptics in the pulpit."

"So there are," he replied. "Methodists and Presbyterians, and others who once fancied themselves secure and well-grounded in their belief are, like certain prominent members of the National Church, every day yielding little by little to the pressing arguments of heterodox writers. With reference to the doctrine of eternal punishment several of our ablest divines try to explain away this alleged blot on the character of the Deity, and to a large number of our most thoughtful and intelligent church members this fearful retribution is most repulsive. Indeed, I have recently heard many of our people say that God cannot be good and be revengeful; that his honor and glory is not advanced by the condemnation of the fallible beings he created to the shocking tortures and unspeakable torments of hell. He made men with their imperfections and with such tendencies to err as they naturally possess. Is it just that they should be held to a terrible responsibility for any defective workmanship on the part of the Great Architect? What would be thought of an ordinary mortal who would insist on such conditions, or who could exhibit a spirit of such fearful implacability? No, my friend, were the Almighty to doom even one sinner to everlasting torture, it would rob him of his title to be

either merciful or gracious, and would reduce him to a Being of vindictiveness. I must admit to you that I cannot, that I dare not, consider the Omnipotent Being whom we would worship so atrocious as to claim a retaliation which would doom so many myriads to an unappeasable vengeance."

"It would not be morally right, it would not be justice, it would not be God-like," I answered. "Man can forgive his bitterest enemy. Even after long, long years of cruel hostility to an enemy, he can at last relent and pity. Can man possess the sublime attribute of forgiveness to a greater degree than the Almighty?"

"Impossible," continued my friend, "for already the pulpit has found a tongue, and in defiance of all prejudice and opposition, preachers, even at the risk of expulsion, have given no uncertain sound in defence of Divine mercy. There are now two classes of the ordained expounders of the Word who are at issue on the subject of hell. Those who favor eternal punishment are still the majority. In looking over what Edwards, or Baxter, or Doddridge have said regarding God's deep vengeance on sinners, one would imagine that they believed the condemnation of the wicked was indispensable to God's glory and a cause of rejoicing for the redeemed. Without quoting the terrible comments of these writers, let us hear what some of the later and present advocates of the doctrine of Divine retribution teach and assert on this repulsive dogma.*

* By order of the Methodist Conference a Catechism "for children of tender years" (1) has been published and contains the following questions and answers about hell:—

"What sort of a place is Hell?"

"It is a dark, bottomless pit, full of fire and brimstone."

"How will the wicked be punished there?"

"The wicked will be punished in Hell by having their bodies tormented by fire, and their souls by a sense of the wrath of God."

"How long will these torments last?"

"The torments of Hell will last forever and ever."

Comment on such wretched teaching to "children of tender years" is unnecessary.

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President Finney declares: "We may add and multiply until figures are exhausted; let each figure represent a million of ages; that after having suffered the pains of Hell until these figures are thus exhausted, we have no less days to roll in torments than when we were first cast in!"

Bishop Peck, in his missionary discourse, described the "screech of a lost soul" as follows: "We must get the people to think, in connection with the cause of missions, of the value of an immortal soul; to think of Christ's redeeming love; to think of the terrible darkness that gathers round the death-bed scenes of dying millions; to think of the endless pain or misery that depends upon the success or failure of the Gospel to reach the benighted; to think of the horror of a single screech of a lost soul wandering out alone through the blackness of eternal despair; to think of the agony of the damned, if only for twenty-four hours, and then think of an endless eternity; think of the river of life; think of the joys of the redeemed; think—think—THINK!"

Here I could not help remarking that Bishop Peck's appeal was for *foreign* missions for the "benighted" in foreign lands, who were very probably better fed, clothed, and instructed than thousands of the benighted at home. It would be well for infatuated missionary advocates to think first of the "screech of lost souls" at their own doors, yes, to "think—think—THINK!"

The Rev. Mr. Benson, an English minister, says: "God is present in Hell, in his infinite justice and almighty wrath, as an unfathomable sea of liquid fire, where the wicked must drink in everlasting torture. The presence of God in his vengeance scatters darkness and woe through the dreary regions of misery. As Heaven would be no Heaven if God did not there manifest his love, so Hell would be no Hell if God did not there

display his *wrath*! It is the *presence* and *agency* of God that gives everything virtue and efficacy, without which there can be no life, no sensibility, no power. God is therefore present in Hell to see the punishment of these rebels against his government, that it may be adequate to the infinity of their guilt. His fiery indignation kindles, and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torments, while his powerful presence and operation maintain their being, and render all their powers most acutely sensible, thus setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it cut most intolerably deep. He will exert all his Divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their nature will admit."

"Hold!" I cried, "read no more from that pious bishop. We have been led to believe that where God is, is Heaven; but if, according to this bishop, God is present in Hell with such attributes, it must be Hell indeed!"

"Well," continued my friend, "let us hear what another eminent man has to say. The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon describes a scene as if he had been an actual witness, thus: "The angel binding you hand and foot, holds you one single moment over the mouth of the chasm. He bids you look down!—down!!—down!!! There is no bottom, and you hear coming up from the abyss, sullen moans, and hollow groans, and screams of tortured ghosts. You quiver, your bones melt like wax, and your marrow quakes within you! Where is now thy might? and where thy boasting and bragging? Ye shriek and cry, ye beg for mercy, but the angel with one tremendous grasp seizes you fast and huris you down with the cry, 'Away! away!' and down you go to the pit that is bottomless, and roll forever downward—downward—downward—ne'er to find a resting place for the soles of your feet!" "But in Hell there is no hope. They have not even the hope of dying—the hope

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vive attributes to make them
ity of their nature will admit."
read no more from that pious
ed to believe that where God
according to this bishop, God is
h attributes, it must be Hell

my friend, "let us hear what
has to say. The Rev. C. H.
ene as if he had been an actual
angel binding you hand and foot,
moment over the mouth of the
look down!—down!!—down!!!
you hear coming up from the
d hollow groans, and screams of
quiver, your bones melt like
quakes within you! Where is
ere thy boasting and bragging?
eg for mercy, but the angel with
seizes you fast and hurls you
way! away!' and down you go
less, and roll forever downward
d—ne'er to find a resting place
et!" "But in Hell there is no
even the hope of dying—the hope

of being annihilated! They are forever—forever—forever lost! On every chain in Hell there is written, 'Forever!' In the fires there blazes out the word, 'Forever!' Up above their heads they read 'Forever!' Their eyes are galled, and their hearts are pained with the thought that it is forever!"

"What wild, delirious vehemence! This man," exclaimed my friend, "is accounted an eminent preacher, whose pious discourses are said to be attractive to thousands. Judging him by what we have just read, no distracted inmate of a lunatic asylum could give expression to fanatical incoherencies more hideous or abominable. No wonder that such asylums are the refuge of so many of the despairing who have been robbed of hope and made wretched burdens on society, by the frenzied maniacal ravings of such an insensate monomaniac as the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. It would be far better for many that such teachers should be confined for a time to some 'pit,' rather than Reason should be bowed to the dust, in order that such frantic prophets should be venerated or trusted. The doctrine of eternal punishment has been carried to a frightful extent. Charles Fowler, the Secretary of a missionary society, is reported to have lately said that "six hundred millions of Heathen march into Hell every thirty-three years!"

The early fathers of the Christian Church found it necessary to alarm sinners by threats of eternal punishment similar to those still used at the present day. In the second century, Tertullian, in a discourse against the follies of the Pagan Romans, said: "You are fond of spectacles: expect the greatest of all spectacles—the last and eternal judgment of the universe! How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs and fancied gods groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many

magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquifying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians, so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames, with their deluded scholars, so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ!"

"These utterings are," I exclaimed, "most impious. Such opinions delivered even by the so-called servants of God are actual blasphemies against the Deity."

"Nothing less," continued my friend. "I might read others of the same kind, but the mind must be diseased which could believe that a benevolent Being could be so atrocious as such rabid teachers represent. But, Heaven be praised! the pulpit may not much longer be degraded by men who attribute to the Almighty that which the most humane believe must be contrary to his nature. Let us hear what other preachers have to say in support of God's reconciliation and forgiveness, and in opposition to the doctrine of retribution so eagerly taught by a class of gloomy-predicting instructors and excited revivalists. Here is an extract from a sermon preached not long since by the Rev. Dr. Farrar, Canon of Westminster. He says: 'I repudiate these creeds and ghastly travesties of the holy and awful will of God. I arraign them as mercilessly ignorant. I impeach them as a falsehood against Christ's universal and absolute redemption. I denounce them as a blasphemy against God's exceeding and eternal love.'

'Now, I ask you, where would be the popular teachings about Hell, if we calmly and deliberately erased from our English Bibles the three words—damnation, Hell, and everlasting? Yet I say, unhesitatingly,—I say, claiming the fullest right to speak with the authority of knowledge,—I say with the calmest and most unflinching sense of responsibility,—I say, standing here in the sight of God and of my Saviour, and, it may

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 d of my Saviour, and, it may

be, of the angels and of the spirits of the dead,—that
 not one of these words ought to stand any longer in our
 English Bibles; and that being, in our present accepta-
 tion of them, simply mistranslations, they most unques-
 tionably will not stand in the revised version of the
 Bible if the revisers have understood their duty.

'An arbitrary infliction of burning torment, an end-
 less agony, a material hell of worm and flame, a doom
 to everlasting sin, and all this with no prospect of
 amendment, with no hope of relief, the soul's trans-
 gressions of a few brief hours of struggling, tempted
 life, followed by billions of millenniums in scorching
 fire, and all this meant not to correct, but to harden;
 not to amend, but to torture and degrade—did you
 believe in that for any one whom you have ever loved?
 Again, I say, God forbid!—again, I say, I fling from
 me with abhorrence such a creed as that. Let every
 Pharisee gnash his teeth if he will; let every dogmatist
 anathematize; but that I cannot and do not believe.
 Scripture will not let me; my conscience, my reason,
 my faith in Christ, the voice of the spirit within my
 soul, will not let me; God will not let me!'"

What a wide divergence of opinion there is between
 these two preachers, Spurgeon and Farrar, on a subject
 which is said to be so momentous! Both are dis-
 tinguished Protestant ministers.* Spurgeon is almost
 the idol of his congregation—particularly of the female
 portion—and is known all over the world as the
 renowned advocate of evangelical truth. Dr. Farrar is
 one of the most eminent Canons of the State Church,
 and, as a highly-educated man, vehemently denounces
 the libellous teaching—libellous against the Deity—of
 such fatuous, excited enthusiasts as Spurgeon and others
 of his type. If Spurgeon has the truth, Farrar must be
 engulfed in error. How are hearers unskilled in theo-

* Rev. Dr. Farrar has lately died.

logical subtleties to decide who is right? But Dr. Farrar is by no means alone in his opinions; we have a host of others to sustain him. Let us look among the so-called Dissenters; we shall take one as noted in his way as Spurgeon.

In a sermon on Hell the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher said:—"The doctrine that God has been for a thousand years peopling the earth with human beings, during a period three-fourths of which was not illuminated by an altar or a church, and in places where a vast population is yet without that sight, is to transform the Almighty into a monster more hideous than Satan himself, and I swear by all that is sacred that I will never worship Satan, though he should appear in royal robes and seated on the throne of Jehovah. Men may say, 'You will not go to Heaven.' A Heaven presided over by such a demon as that, who has been peopling this world with millions of human beings and then sweeping them off into Hell, not like dead flies, but without taking the trouble even to kill them, and gloating and laughing over their misery, is not such a Heaven as I want to go to. The doctrine is too horrible. I cannot believe it, and I won't. They say the saints in Heaven are so happy that they do not mind the torments of the damned in Hell; but what sort of saints must they be, who could be happy while looking down on the horrors of the bottomless pit? They don't mind—they're safe, they're happy. By the blood of Christ I denounce it; by the wounds in His hands and His side I abhor it; by His groans and agony I abhor and denounce it as the most hideous nightmare of theology!"

These are strong, unmistakable words of repudiation. We have others equally emphatic. The Rev. Dr. Thomas, a Methodist minister, in a late discourse said: "John Wesley believed in a Hell of literal fire or material fire. He says there is no such thing as imma-

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terial fire; and in answer to the objection that such a
material fire would destroy any body on which it might
act, he says that God has mercifully given us an example
that such is not the case—in the asbestos, a kind of flax
that no heat could consume. And then he says that if
it is not material fire, it is something worse. Such a
thought makes the idea of God impossible. We cannot,
with such a picture before us, as millions of his children
—those whom he called into being—suffering forever
the agonies of such a Hell, think of him as God; for
to think of any being less than absolute perfection, or
that might be better, is not to think of God at all. If
I believed such a doctrine of future punishment; if I
believed that millions who once lived here were in such
torments and must stay there forever; if I believed
that I should never smile again; if I believed it I could
wish that I had never been born; I could wish the
world had never been made; that mankind had never
been created. If I believed that, I could wish that the
race would perish from the earth; that star after star
might fade out till the heavens were only blackness. If
I believed that, I could wish that the universe might
sink into nothingness, and that God himself might be
annihilated. I don't believe it, and I don't see how
any sensible man who believes in God can believe it."

Many other such rejections are now almost daily pre-
sented to the Christian public, and already synods,
conferences, and convocations are busy investigating
charges for such alleged heterodox teaching. Turn
where we will, to England, Ireland, Holland, France,
Germany, or America, and we find the most thoughtful
clerical minds, heedless of consequences, denouncing
in no very measured terms from the pulpit, the doctrine
of eternal punishment which Canon Farrar and others
assert is nothing but "A blasphemy against God's
exceeding and eternal love."

Looking back after long years at the past, after every mental effort to believe as Wesley believed, as Clarke believed, and as a majority of our preachers still believe, I cannot think that a merciful Deity deliberately planned Hell to take vengeance on those who knew him not. After praying against doubt, after invoking aid for a firm belief of all that was in the written Word, I must here solemnly avow that my fervent prayers have not been answered, that that belief never came; and that now aged, and gray, and superannuated, I am still a doubter. As a preacher, how shocked I have been while reading denunciatory texts which were most repulsive to me as a human being; and, when standing before all, how many times I have blushed at giving reluctant utterance to what are now proclaimed as being blasphemies against Heaven!

Talk of the consolations of religion—Oh! how many, to my knowledge, have been robbed of hope, how many have been left raving, melancholy maniacs, how many have been driven to suicide under the delusion that they had committed some “unpardonable sin,” that God had turned his face from them, and that the Holy Spirit had taken his flight, leaving them only the doom of eternal perdition! These, alas! are not imaginary cases, but are such as still exist with terrible vividness in my memory. With the sad knowledge I have had of the results in many instances of the threats of eternal punishment, how could I be else than reluctant to read or comment on denunciatory texts? How could I reverently or truly ask a congregation to sing to the “praise and glory of God” any hymn to be sung in a dolorous strain, and commencing as follows!—

“The great archangels’ trump shall sound,
(While twice ten thousand thunders roar,)
Tear up the graves and cleave the ground,
To make the greedy sea restore.

ears at the past, after every Wesley believed, as Clarke of our preachers still believe, al Deity deliberately planned in those who knew him not. bt, after invoking aid for a in the written Word, I must my fervent prayers have not belief never came; and that superannuated, I am still a how, shocked I have been texts which were most repul- g; and, when standing before e blushed at giving reluctant proclaimed as being blasphe-

of religion—Oh! how many, been robbed of hope, how g, melancholy maniacs, how to suicide under the delusion some "unpardonable sin," face from them, and that the flight, leaving them only the ! These, alas! are not imag- h as still exist with terrible y. With the sad knowledge I many instances of the threats ow could I be else than reluc- on denunciatory texts? How ask a congregation to sing to God "any hymn to be sung in nouncing as follows!—

s' trump shall sound,
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and cleave the ground,
dy sea restore.

"The greedy sea shall yield her dead,
The earth no more her slain conceal;
*Sinners shall lift their guilty head,
And shrink to see a yawning Hell.*

"He while the stars from Heaven fall,
And mountains are on mountains hurl'd,
Shall stand unmoved amidst them all,
And smile to see a burning world."

The revised New Testament has just made its appearance. Many had hoped that the maleficent doctrines relating to a personal Devil, to a Hell, to a bottomless pit, to a lake of fire and brimstone, and to a furnace of fire, would have been so euphemised as to amount almost to their rejection; but, with slight modifications, they are still retained. Fanatical priests have yet their God of vengeance, and such preachers as Spurgeon have been left their gloomy Gehenna so as they may still be able to hear "the scream of tortured ghosts." The majority of pulpiteers will as yet favor no progress in theology. Like the Church of Rome, they will make no admission and deny the possibility of improvement. But even among the clericals dissatisfaction still exists. Many of them now tell us that the Revision needs revision. This continued disagreement among the ordained will not lessen the doubts of sceptics as to the validity of Revelation. We shall still have a Babel of opinions respecting the meaning or the authenticity of disputed texts.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

When we reflect on how short a time we remain in this world, and on the ignorance and fallibility of human beings in general, it is the part of discretion that man should be humble instead of ostentatiously boastful of the little knowledge he may have acquired beyond that possessed by others. Our greatest mental accumulations are at least but comparative poverty. All which the most learned know, compared with that which is beyond the constant study of a lifetime, is as but the germ when contrasted with the full growth of the towering tree; a poor incentive to encourage the spirit of pedantry and dogmatism which is far too prevalent. A man of good sense will therefore perceive that though the torch which he bears may spread the light a little further around than those borne by others, yet he may be only better enabled to discover the dim outlines of the Unknown and the vast magnitude of distant objects which may never be more clearly revealed. Were we permitted to continue a plodding progress towards youth for even more than a century, we would find at the end of the period how little we still knew, and how much we had to unlearn; we should discover that we had also hoarded up many glittering counterfeits which required to be stamped as spurious and flung aside.

When we listen to the suggestions of Prejudice, we are deaf to the voice of Truth. The most prejudiced and assuming persons I have ever met with have been some of the most religious. Those who are wrapped in

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the tawdry mantle of self-sufficiency affect to regard the
 modest apparel of others as being rent, patched, and
 threadbare. Some religious teachers imagine that they
 are gifted with a most penetrating discernment, and
 are too ready to attribute improper motives to those
 who object to their dictation, and to see moral obliqui-
 ties where none exist. It is said that the hood of a
 monk covers the head of many a sinner, and as I have
 had much reason to be disgusted with pretension, I now
 feel that it is my duty to speak against a class of men—
 a class to which I but lately belonged—who seem to
 have inherited that particular frailty in its most offen-
 sive form. It has to be admitted that the prefix of
 "Reverend"—a vain but coveted title—has gained a
 certain share of respect for many an ignoble mind, for
 many a feeble intellect; and for many a garrulous,
 conceited dunce who might otherwise be treated with
 contempt. A long intercourse with the clergy of nearly
 all denominations has convinced me of this. I have
 already alluded to the assumption, the bigotry, the dog-
 matism, the obstinacy, and the intolerance of reputed
 religious people among whom I have found preachers,
 or so-called clerical men, to be the most willful and
 incorrigible.

Claiming to have a full knowledge of what I write, I
 assert that there is far too much deference paid to the
 clergy. They are a pampered class, receiving in many
 ways far too much respect and consideration from their
 hearers, especially too much flattery and attention from
 Christian women. What I say is in the interest of
 truth. I have no motive in maligning any human
 being; but I do now deliberately declare that while
 many ministers of the gospel are excellent and liberal
 men,—even in spite of their theological training,—the
 majority of such as I have known have been self-willed,
 wrong-headed men, generally conservative in notion,

and in many respects obstructive to progress, religions, social, and intellectual; and I furthermore hold and maintain that were it not for the priests of all denominations, Christian as well as Mahometan and Pagan, pure and undefiled religion in its best sense would be more acceptable, numerous wrongs would have been righted,—they might have never existed,—numerous woes might have been spared, and the millions of the human race who have passed away, and the millions who are still suffering from the existence of unjust and oppressive laws, would most probably have found this fair world a paradise instead of what it is and has been, to the great majority, a pandemonium. The priests in all ages have been subservient to power in order to be favored by those in authority, despots or otherwise. No class of men have been more governed by motives of cupidity, or have been more voracious for wealth, power, and distinction. In every period tyrannical rulers have found their most trusty allies or subservient tools in a well-paid priesthood; their influence in every part of the world has been mostly on the side of despotic power.

Let judgment be impartial, and you will find even at the present day that every religious or political tyrant or usurper—king, queen, kaiser, or pope—has the clergy at command. Let a mandate be issued to-morrow, no matter how oppressive or atrocious, and you will find the majority of the clergy recommending obedience to rulers. The Czar of Russia, the Pope of Rome, or the Queen of England, has but to stamp the foot to set bells ringing and priests praying in support of "lawful authority," and whenever any number of the ordained have been found opposing the views of a despotic ruler, it has generally been because the tyrant or dictator has favored some opposing religious sect. Ask all history for the proof of this. These strong

destructive to progress, religions, and I furthermore hold and for the priests of all denominations as Mahometan and Pagan, in its best sense would be its wrongs would have been never existed,—numerous, and the millions of the passed away, and the millions in the existence of unjust and most probably have found this of what it is and has been, and demonium. The priests in violent to power in order to be authority, despots or otherwise. In more governed by motives in more voracious for wealth, In every period tyrannical most trusty allies or subservient hood; their influence in every in mostly on the side of despotic

partial, and you will find even every religious or political, queen, kaiser, or pope—has Let a mandate be issued to—oppressive or atrocious, and of the clergy recommending Czar of Russia, the Pope of England, has but to stamp the and priests praying in support and whenever any number of found opposing the views of a erally been because the tyrant some opposing religious sect. proof of this. These strong

assertions, from one who but a few years back was a preacher himself, may startle the reader, but though late in life, I am now free to speak, and cannot suppress my strong convictions; and I say, let any impartial man read, or re-read, the history of the world, and I claim, without the least fear of successful contradiction, that he will be able to trace most or many of the greatest misfortunes of any particular country to the machinations directly or indirectly of its priesthood.

Without reverting to the degenerating sway of the priests of ancient Pagan times, let us pass over centuries of misrule and turbulence resulting from conflicts between Christianity and the ancient faiths, and glance at what may be charged against Christian teachers since the establishment of Christianity in Europe; also, let it never be forgotten that Constantine, so called “the Great,”—a monster who was the murderer of his wife Fausta, of his son Crispus, and of other relatives and persons,—was the first who was mainly instrumental in causing Christianity to supplant the ancient Pagan Roman faith. He patronized the new religion not because he had any sincere convictions in its favor, but because by the teaching of Christian priests of submission to those in authority, he could the more easily rule and subdue the people whom he wished to govern. This unscrupulous man was, it is said, the first who cast the religion of Christ to the “unhallowed embraces of the State,” and all for the accomplishment of his own bad purposes; and since that time Christian priests have undoubtedly been more ready to obey the behests and accept the patronage of similar rulers in every quarter of the world.

We have undoubted proof that it was by the fanaticism and urgency of Christian priests that the crusades were commenced and followed up until untold treasure had been lavished, millions of lives sacrificed, and all

Europe kept in a state of commotion for nearly two centuries; they have been the cause of innumerable desolating wars and sanguinary conflicts; they have preached intolerance, established the Inquisition, and have caused the black wings of persecution to be spread wide over the nations. Since the Reformation, Protestant priests have to the extent of their power proved themselves as bitter and merciless theological tyrants as the Catholics they once so vigorously denounced. England, Ireland, Scotland, France, and other countries, can give ample evidence as to the truth of this. Among all denominations there is scarcely a cessation of the battle of creeds; all because priests, wishing to govern, will insist that what may appear truth to their narrow views, must be upheld at any price; and where denominational interests are concerned, they are most unscrupulous in their methods to gain an advantage. What great reform—social, moral, political, or religious—has not, before it became popular, at first met with opposition from the clergy? Instances of this kind are too numerous to set down. Pulpit fulminations have thundered against progress in different directions, and men who were centuries in advance of their time have had to keep silent and hide their talent, lest the hand of the theological despot should bring them to a terrible reckoning for their daring but beneficial innovations.

Priests, while professing to preach peace, have, in subserviency to those who rule, set man against man, and they have shouted as lustily in favor of war as the despot or politician who keeps far from the field of carnage; and as they were once ready advocates for degrading personal slavery, they are still the advocates of mental bondage, denouncing free thought and free speech where theology is concerned, and still plotting against the enfranchisement of the human mind. Protestant Jesuitical priests are now more dangerous

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to the community than the scattered members of the
genuine old brood itself. The machinations of the
latter are known and guarded against, the arts and
subtlety of the former are as yet comparatively un-
suspected. For craft, meanness, intolerance, and
despicable shifts and stratagems, our Protestant cler-
ical despots are fully equal to their brothers of Rome.
Take up any evangelical paper or magazine, and see
the unscrupulous way that clerical editors or religious
writers slander and misrepresent their heterodox oppo-
nents. The leading thinkers and reformers of the day,
who are generally denounced as sceptics, are too often
most shamefully maligned. Is this the way to make
Christianity attractive to those who conscientiously
doubt its claims? From what we repeatedly see and
hear of the intolerance of clerical bigots, it is evident
that they only want an opportunity to recommence
persecution. Indeed, the bitterness of sect against sect
at times is a very strong proof of the latent disposition
for intolerance even among Christians towards one
another; how much more strongly do we find this
exhibited in denunciations of the heterodox! A thou-
sand cases could be detailed of how Catholics have
execrated Protestants, and Protestants Catholics, and
then how both have co-operated in the persecution of
Jews. We know how our State Church has proscribed
Dissenters; how these have striven among themselves,
and how again all have united in a hue and cry against
the sceptic and unbeliever. A few late instances of
the manifestation of intolerance and intense bigotry by
religious teachers can here be given:—

Father Hyacinthe, or Pere Hyacinthe, as he is more
generally known, is an eminent French Catholic priest,
who has claimed and taken more liberty than the
Catholic Church generally allows to its clergymen, and
for this he has been greatly maligned by strict sub-

missive churchmen, and the Rev. Alexander Henry, an English Catholic priest, said to be even a very estimable man, thus addressed his erring brother:—

“*St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Leonard-on-the-Sea.*

“To M. LOYSON, formerly FATHER HYACINTHE:—

“Sir—To call you a liar would be to say nothing new, since the Devil, the father of all such apostates, was a liar from the beginning. To call you a conspirator would be only to recognize your proper aspirations. To call you a Protestant would be only to apply to you an epithet common to all who have opposed the faith. I prefer, then, to recognize your proper character as a child of Satan and to call you damned! By this title I salute you.

“As a priest of the Holy Roman Church, Catholic and Apostolic, I experience a supreme pleasure in awaiting the day of death and of the last judgment, when I shall see you and collaborators of the *Esperance de Rome* cast into the pit and its torments forever! When I reflect on the existence of such apostates as you, I bless the justice of God that it provides a hell. Your career and success in this world will probably be brief. Rome will be delivered from such miscreants, and much sooner than you think.

“But Oh! what a glory it will be for the Christian Church, when the last judgment shall publicly justify the condemnation of all apostates, even one so insignificant as you.

“(Signed) REV. ALEX. HENRY.”

What a delectable instance of the charity and forbearance still existing even among priests of the great “Apostolic” Roman Church!

The *American Protestant* quotes Archbishop Manning as speaking for the Pope. His Holiness is made to say

“You tell me that I ought to submit to the civil power

the Rev. Alexander Henry, an
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ly FATHER HYACINTHE:—
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ught to submit to the civil power,

that I am the subject of the King of Italy. . . . I say
I am liberated from all subjection, that my Lord made
me the subject of no one on earth, king or otherwise,
that in his right I am sovereign. I acknowledge no
civil superior, I am the subject of no prince, and I claim
to be more than this—I claim to be the supreme Judge
and director of the consciences of men—of the peasant
that tills the field, and the prince that sits on the
throne—of the household that lives in the shade of
privacy, and the Legislature that makes laws for king-
doms—I am the last supreme Judge of what is right
and wrong." There, that is one specimen of what
priestly arrogance can claim even in these modern days!

In a number of a Catholic religious paper, entitled
the "Shepherd of the Valley," published at St. Louis,
in the United States, Archbishop Kendrick gives us a
declaration as to how his church would deal again with
heretics if its infamous power were restored—danger-
ously pampered as it is by American politicians. "The
church tolerates heretics but hates them mortally, and
employs all her force to secure their annihilation. When
the Catholics shall here be in possession of a considerable
majority, which will certainly be the case bye-and-bye,
although the time may be long deferred—then religious
liberty will have come to an end in the Republic of the
United States. Our enemies say this and we believe
with them. Our enemies know that we do not pretend
to be better than our church, and, in what concerns
this, her history is open to the eyes of all. They know,
then, how the Roman Church dealt with heretics in the
Middle Ages, and how she deals with them to-day
everywhere where she has the power. We no more
think of denying these historical facts, than we do of
blaming the saints of God, and the princes of the
church for what they have done or approved in these
matters.

"Heresy is a mortal sin; it kills the soul and precipitates the whole soul into Hell. It is, moreover, a most contagious disease, and propagates itself indefinitely wherever it has got foothold, and thus puts in jeopardy the temporal and moral welfare of innumerable generations to come. This is the reason why princes, truly Christian, extirpate heresy, root and branch, in their kingdoms, and that Christian States drive it out of their Territories, as far as they are able to do it. If we now abstain from persecuting heretics here, we boldly repeat it, it is because we are too weak, and because we believe that in this condition of things, we should, in attempting to do it, do the church more harm than good."

Though this is truly a dreadful confession from Archbishop Kendrick, he cannot in fairness be set down as a Jesuit, for he speaks out too plainly for that; and though he intimates that his church would not think of denying the historical facts relating to its fiendish cruelty towards heretics in the Middle Ages, we know too well that his church has virtually denied them, and has vainly tried to shift the responsibility for the atrocities committed by the "Holy Inquisition" on the secular power. Heaven save us from the rule of priests or princes "truly Christian," in his sense; had they power, what another effort there would be towards extermination! Here we see an Archbishop, with all his alleged gifts, graces, and piety, foaming like a chained tiger anxious to plunge its extended jaws in human gore.

As it would require volumes to set down the fulminations and atrocities that Christianity in the shape of Romanism has committed, we shall turn and glance at the "truly Christian spirit" which has incited Protestants not only to retaliate on Catholics but on one another, and which has urged them even in conjunction with the Pope himself, to attempt by cruel and unscrupulous

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volumes to set down the fulminations of Christianity in the shape of, we shall turn and glance at "spirit" which has incited Protestants on Catholics but on one charged them even in conjunction attempt by cruel and unscrupulous

pulous means the annihilation of unbelievers. That the "truly Christian spirit" is still actively working, can be illustrated by even a few of the utterances of Protestant priests of the most evangelical type.

The leading exponents of reformed Christianity tell us that the Pope is "Antichrist," "The Man of Sin," and that the Catholic religion is but a "degrading superstition." Thousands of Catholics have had to forfeit their lives, and still many more thousands of them have had to flee in terror from the "truly Christian spirit,"—the pious vengeance—of persecuting Protestants. Then as to the same spirit which has actuated "ministers of God" in other directions, let us give a few of the latest instances. The Rev. Dr. Joseph Cummings, President of the Wesleyan University of Middleton, (Conn.) in the United States, at a public meeting of the National Christian Association, is reported to have said,—"Some Infidels, relying on the negative character of the Constitution of the country, have set up a claim to the right of protection in their behalf. I emphatically deny their right to protection. No man has any right to be an Infidel, no Infidel has any protection in the expression of his sentiments. If he attempts to propagate any ideas tending to subvert society—that is, Christian society—he ought to be crushed like a viper." Good lack! what a mercy it is that this contemptible man has not sufficient power to execute his will over those who cannot believe in his religion! Little more than half a century ago, the Methodists, or Ranters, or Twaddlers, as they were ignominiously called by the Reverends or Lordly Right Reverends of the Established Church, were but a pitiful sect, and their illiterate preachers, scoffed and laughed at by a jeering populace, were very ready to preach and claim toleration of honest convictions. But now since "our beloved Wesleyanism"

has become popular and wealthy, many of its Reverend "Doctors" and "Professors," puffed with piety and self-importance, would deny that natural right and exhibit *their* "truly Christian spirit" by crushing as a viper the man of heterodox opinions.

A specimen of Protestant Jesuitism unsurpassed for meanness was lately given in New York by a very prominent clergyman. A meeting of a Society, said to be for the suppression of vice and immoral publications, was lately held in that city. A noted and unprincipled agent of that junto was in the habit of resorting to very discreditable artifices for the purpose of entrapping suspected persons, and in pursuit of his prey he actually visited a house of ill-fame and induced the female occupants to exhibit themselves in a nude state to him and others; he sent decoy letters to parties supposed to be engaged in the sale of books alleged to be of indecent character. The treacherous mode which he adopted, and which it appears had the sanction of his pious employers in order to secure the conviction of certain parties, was condemned by the press, and many outspoken comments were made by highly respectable persons against a method so plainly dishonorable. The Rev. Dr. Howard Crosby, LL. D., then Chancellor of the University of New York, attended that meeting, and, as reported, spoke as follows in favor of the deceptive conduct of the unscrupulous detective:—

"Deceiving them! I tell you, gentlemen, I believe in deceit. I believe in deceit whenever you have got a rightful enemy to destroy. Could you carry on a war without deceit? Are you going to tell your enemy everything you are going to do? Whenever you have a rightful enemy, and have a right under God to destroy him, you have a right to deceive him."

How acceptable these words will be to the followers of Loyola! Chancellor Crosby is evidently in the wrong

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place. His moral ideas fit him for a distinguished
position among the wily, insidious, clerical Thugs of
the Society of Jesus.

Another towering champion of the faith lately gave a
shameful exhibition of intolerance against a very emi-
nent man, whose honored name and whose writings are
known in every civilized part of the world. During
Professor Huxley's late visit to the United States, his
teaching and lectures were so appreciated that Orthodox
and Heterodox alike paid him the most courteous atten-
tion, and the most generous hospitalities were offered
him in every direction. These marks of approval for
the eminent but sceptical scientist, excited jealousy and
the latent bigotry in the narrow minds of a few petty
preachers, — Sunday-school philosophers, — and they
warned the people of Buffalo, in which city Professor
Huxley was then entertained, against bestowing hos-
pitality on a man who they said was not a believer in
Christianity. An article to this effect appeared in a
paper called *The Orbit*, and when a certain Bishop
named Coxe assumed the responsibility of the spiteful
paragraph, he was indignantly assailed by writers in
several papers; and the hospitable people of the city
that the great Huxley had honored with his presence
were thoroughly ashamed of the conduct of Bishop
Coxe and the doltish Reverends who co-operated with
him in producing the ebullition of this "truly Christian
spirit."

These are but a few out of a large number of
instances where the clergy have shown such intolerance
as to disgust many with the so-called "truly Christian
spirit" manifested by preachers of a gospel of peace
and good will. Their mischievous meddling and inter-
ference in church, family, social, and political affairs,
has caused much deplorable strife, and their obstinate
course too often urged against useful innovations and

reforms has greatly retarded progress. None are more contentious than the clergy. Even in the discussion of points of doctrine, they often become personal and offensive towards one another. They seldom meet at synods, conferences, or church meetings, without engaging in bitter strife, sometimes ending in blows. The newspapers frequently furnish us with accounts of such scenes. The Pall Mall Gazette, of London, referring to one of the latest of these disturbances, says: "Recently at a church meeting in Glasgow, the congregation, with a view of settling a point of order, proceeded to seize each other by the throat, and fought over the question for an hour or two, clergy, elders, deacons, communicants, and catechumens, male and female, rushing indiscriminately at one another with cries and blows, and defying the efforts of a dozen or score of the police to calm the confusion." Were the generality of preachers actuated by a proper spirit of peace, so much could not be recorded to their discredit. Were they so actuated, their influence, which is unhappily too often exercised in the wrong direction, would do much to abolish the curse of war among nations, and to promote feelings of peace and good will among men.

And then what an example in other ways have the priests set the people! As a rule, they live a life of idleness and self-indulgence, and, as a class, the sin of sensuality is, beyond all doubt or denial, their besetting sin. Records are at hand to prove that they have betrayed confidence, that they have set families at variance, that they have ruined reputations, that they are and have been repeatedly detected in *liaisons*, that they have abetted crime and been convicted of various felonies. Scarcely a day passes that you cannot hear or read of some clerical absconder, of some clerical turpitude, or of some clerical expulsion. Indeed, so familiar

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are the public with such accounts of priestly infamy, that *The Pulpit*, a religious magazine published in New York, tried in a long article to frame an excuse for the erring pastors, and among other startling things said:—

"We infer from what we hear in private conversation, and what we read in the public journals, that the public think it very marvellous that so many of the clergy are wrecked upon the rock of sensuality. The astonishment is not astonishing. People who do not make a habit of thinking will hardly be thoughtful enough to know the fact in reference to this matter. The fact is, there is no profession, class, or avocation so exposed to or tempted by the devil of sensuality as the ministry. . . . No man in the world has so few conditions imposed upon him at the threshold of society as the clergyman. His passport to society is almost a *carte blanche*. Women of both states and all ages are his companions, socially and professionally. The rules of social intercommunication between the sexes are, in his case, virtually suspended. What would be indiscretion with other men, is a matter of course with him. He shares or is alternately admitted to the privacy of the sick room with the physician.

"Whenever spiritual advice is called for, there he reigns alone and unmolested. And he is a sedentary man, of nervous, sanguine temperament, and, like all men of this sort and life, feels the law of his flesh warring against the law of his religion. None have such passions as those of a sedentary life. In proportion to the idleness of the muscles is the activity of the passions. The devil tempts the industrious; idle men tempt the devil. The clergy should give more earnest heed to 'muscular Christianity.' But not only is their life afflicted with deficiency in bodily exercise, but it is additionally cursed with temptations that take advantage of this physical feebleness. Considering, then,

this sandy-haired composition, this nervous combustibility, this superabundance of sexual heat from a deficiency in physical exertion, and this extraordinary exposure to the wiles of the wicked, and the insinuating influences of unsuspicion, the marvel, nay, the miracle, is, that not so many, but so few, of the clergy fall into the sins of sensuality. The wonder is, not that so many yield, but that so many stand firm!" (!!!)

The foregoing sample of special pleading, of daring exculpation, is from *The Pulpit* of November, 1867. Yet well may the reverend sensualists pray to be saved from such a friend. What a scathing exposure of the inner life and temptation of the unsuspicious "sandy-haired" clergy suffering from a superabundance "of sexual heat!" Good God! One is almost forced to rub his eyes in astonishment that such an extenuation was deliberately allowed to appear in the pages of a religious magazine in order to shield, if possible, the low cunning and villany of spiritual advisers who, while in company with "women of both states," and exposed to their wicked wiles, "alone and unmolested," "feel the law of their flesh warring against the law of their religion." Religious papers, as a rule, make strong efforts to hide the many vile acts of clerical debauchees, but were any secular journal to use a similar line of defence for other reprobates as that used by *The Pulpit* for erring pastors, what indignant accusations would be hurled against it by God-fearing people, lay and clerical!

Since this noted quasi-admission of priestly frailty by the popular religious magazine, erring shepherds have become more numerous; we hear of their obliquity in every direction. So far from the lenient comments of *The Pulpit* acting as a deterrent, it seems they have only stimulated many of the ordained to further vicious activity; for did not the religious magazine say in continuation: "And so far from these sins of sensuality

this nervous combustion of sexual heat from a and this extraordinary checked, and the insinuating marvel, nay, the miracle, of the clergy fall into the is, not that so many yield, (!!)

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being the inexplicable lapses they are pronounced to be by the public press and private Grundys, they are not only the least surprising, but *the most excusable sins the clergy can commit?*" Hear this, O, ye "private Grundys, ye fathers and brothers and husbands, and learn from the clerical editor of *The Pulpit* that when your daughters, or sisters, or wives, or female friends, are seduced or debauched by their pious spiritual advisers, you must try and overlook the atrocity and consider it but one of "the most excusable sins the clergy can commit"!!

In connection with this distasteful subject, a book has lately been published, dealing exclusively with the "crimes of the clergy," giving name, place, and date, relating to every vile transaction, and which shows conclusively that within the last five years more than five hundred ministers of the Gospel have, in the United States alone, been accused and convicted of various crimes, many of them being of the most abominable character. It may therefore be assumed, that if a hundred clerical criminals are now annually detected, the iniquities of a far greater number are shielded by pious church members, and many clerical scandals kept forever from the greedy ears of a profane public.

And yet, amazing palliation! Though a ready extenuation can be suggested for the gross dissoluteness of well-fed, full-blooded, petted, and indulged "sandy-haired" disciples, should a thoughtful preacher, exemplary in other respects, venture to express a doubt as to eternal punishment, or lay himself open to the charge of heterodoxy respecting other doctrines, what a commotion there would be among the high priests, and what an apostolic racket for the exposure and expulsion of the offender!

The clergy, as a class, are well known to be arrogant and dictatorial, their self-sufficiency is almost unlimited,

yet when the turn serves they can assume a most exemplary degree of humility, but such humility has too often proved terribly deceptive; it is but the crouch of the tiger before he makes a deadly spring on his defenceless prey.

While Buckle and other writers give numerous instances of the malign influence of the clergy on religious, political, and social affairs, the author of the Celtic Druids thus speaks of the whole class:—"Of all the evils that escaped from Pandora's box, the institution of priesthoods was the worst. Priests have been the curse of the world. And if we admit the merits of many of those of our own time to be as pre-eminent above all others as the *esprit-de-corps* of the most self-contented individual of the order may incite him to consider them, great as I am willing to allow the merits of individuals to be, I will not allow that they form exceptions strong enough to destroy the general nature of the rule. Look at China; at the festival of Juggernaut; the Crusades; the massacres of St. Bartholomew; of the Mexicans and the Peruvians; the fires of the Inquisition; of Mary Cranmer, Calvin, and of the Druids! Look at Ireland; look at Spain; in short, look everywhere, and everywhere you will see the priests reeking with gore! They have converted popular and happy nations into deserts; and have transformed our beautiful world into a slaughter-house, drenched with blood and tears!"

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CHAPTER XXV.

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

There's a good time coming when the despot shall be humbled, when the hand of the tyrant shall be struck down, when right shall be restored, and when the influence of evil men—of professional patriots, and obtrusive, dictatorial priests—shall be gone forever. There's a good time coming when man's conceptions of a Supreme Being shall be more exalted, and when the black clouds of superstition shall roll away, leaving the human mind to be nurtured and strengthened in the clear, glorious sunlight of Reason. From present signs, from the vast spread of knowledge, and from the beautiful prismatic bow now spanning the intellectual heights, one might be encouraged to say that "this generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled."

In a few more years the light of genuine truth, now refulgent on the distant mountain tops, will overwhelm the earth and illuminate every inquiring mind, and the pestiferous mists and gross delusions of ages shall disappear forever. Men, almost everywhere, seem to be waking up from antiquated dreams to realize that these have been but dreams. Even a large number of the clergy, doubtful and undecided on many theological points, as they are known to be, now hesitate to hurl the once ready anathema against the conscientious thinker whom they are forced to respect, but who cannot accept a so-called divine revelation which has been proved already to be in many parts false, immoral, and contradictory. And although some of God's min-

isters—blinded and stupefied by credulity—will still shout pulpit fulminations against the unbeliever, yet when they quote from the "sacred word" texts of intolerance permitting neither communication nor fellowship with such persons, such texts are read to but little purpose; for the human heart and its generous impulses will not be bound down as of yore by the narrowness and illiberality of mandates which conflict with the spirit of the age and with the latent nobility of the human soul.

There was a time when it was dangerous and deadly to be ostracised by the church; but who now fears its threatening? There was a time when the whip, and the stake, and the fagot, and the block—used by Catholics and Protestants alike—caused none but the most daring to do more than whisper against theological tyranny which claimed its dreaded authority from Apostolic words like these—"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed." "Though we or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." "He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses." Numerous other vicious and intolerant texts like these caused tears and blood to flow in profusion, allowed neither pity nor mercy to be shown to sex or age, and brought untold sufferings upon this fair world, making it almost equal to the Orthodox hell with a raging demon of the most theological stamp and origin as its ruler and providence. To-day, happily, the persecuting animus of the pious is limited. The unbeliever is still traduced from the pulpit; the zealous Christian may decline to have fellowship with the Infidel; there may be an attempt at social ostracism, and the books and arguments of the ablest heterodox writers, for want

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of better refutation, may be proscribed as indecent,
obscene, ribald, or blasphemous, as if those who thus
declaim had no knowledge that the “Book of Books”
surpassed, in many passages, all others in such utter-
ances. But the end of this petty malice is drawing
near. In spite of Orthodox bigotry, either on the part
of priest or people, the independent, outspoken sceptic
or unbeliever is looked upon, even by prominent
churchmen, as one generally better informed than
others in the same walk of life, and to-day their
intellectual superiority is admitted; having in their
ranks the ablest scientists, philosophers, and humani-
tarians in England, France, Germany, and the United
States, their lecture-rooms being crowded, and their
books being read with avidity by all classes of the
community.

This is the progress of Free Thought so far. The
Pope may anathematize from the Vatican. The priest
may curse from the altar, the Protestant bishop may
denounce from the pulpit, the people of God may
repeat Scriptural maledictions—all in vain; for the
great work of illumination goes on. Hundreds leave
the sanctuary never to return. One by one the more
candid and enlightened priests retire from the pulpit to
repudiate on a broader platform their previous teach-
ings. Others, to my certain knowledge, remain behind
perplexed with doubt, but without sufficient moral
courage to express them or to relinquish the stipend
attached to their clerical vocation. Apart from titled
distinction and social influence, what an incentive to
belief must be the enormous salaries of some of the
bishops and clergy! With meagre talents compared
with what may be required in many other callings, a
man may become a preacher, attain unbounded influ-
ence, live like a prince or modern apostle, and become
wealthy. Such inducements make preaching a pro-

fession to be coveted, and, with the majority of those who "minister in sacred things," it is but a vocation adopted and followed with no higher purpose in view than to make a respectable living,—just for the same reason that a doctor chooses his profession, or that another person practices at law.

Still, it cannot be denied that there are among the clergy of all denominations sincere and excellent but mistaken men, who regard preaching as a solemn duty, and who truly believe every word, sentence, chapter, and book in the Bible to be divinely inspired. But with the opportunities for education now within the reach of almost any one, and with the teachings of science and philosophy, it requires a great amount of credulity to believe that an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent Deity made a place in which the fallible beings whom he created are, with the exception of a few, to be punished eternally in fiery torments; that God created evil or such a being as Satan, permitting him to use diabolical arts to ensnare sinners to destruction, and that in consequence the great majority of human beings are to be finally lost; and that even within the confines of Heaven itself, the presumed abode of peace and felicity, there was actual war between its angelic denizens!

How few now without a misgiving can believe the story of the fall of Adam, of the Flood and Noah's Ark, of the sun and the moon standing still in the sky? What extravagant belief it requires to suppose that God's favorite people were not coarse, cruel, and blood-thirsty; that to appease his jealousy or anger the Almighty ordered the slaughter of thousands of other nations, including women and innocent children, and directed that unmarried females taken captive should be delivered up, evidently to satisfy the lusts of a brutal soldiery; that atonements for sin were acceptable in

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the slaughter of beasts, in burnt offerings of bullocks,
rams, he-goats, and other animals, which wanton and
filthy sacrifices were to be a "sweet savor unto the
Lord." Who can believe that many of the patriarchs
lived for hundreds of years, or that their general con-
duct was exemplary; that the licentious Solomon was a
wise man; or that David, having the infamous character
deduced even from the Bible, was "a man after God's
own heart"; that the Almighty tolerated slaughter, or
slavery, or polygamy, or witchcraft; that he was governed
as it were by human passions, being at times irascible
or gracious, as the mood might be; that He permitted
Elijah to ascend alive to heaven in a whirlwind; or that
the witch of Endor had power to cause Samuel to appear
after death; that Lazarus was raised alive from the
grave; or that the dead arose, walked about, and
appeared to many at the time of the crucifixion? These
are but a few of the absurd stories, scattered through-
out the Bible, which priests tell us we must accept as
truth, while, in fact, none but those yet in a state of
mental babyhood consider them of more authentic value
than that given to the exploits of Jack the Giant Killer,
or the adventures of Baron Munchausen. Indeed, at
the present day, it is simply impossible to treat such
accounts with seriousness, for in spite of any disposition
to do so, the impulse towards ridicule will become
almost irresistible.

There are, however, many fine precepts in the Bible;
much, also, that is puerile and misleading. The Bible
makes no attack on many of the great wrongs and
abuses which have existed for generations; it leads to
no useful discovery. The soundness or morality of
much of its teaching may well be questioned, and when
it says, "Obey them that have rule over you," even
though they should be tyrants, for we are told that
"the powers that be are ordained of God,"—when we

are told to love our enemies, to resist not evil, and when struck on one cheek to turn the other for a blow, we assert that all Christendom, the mass of believers, priests, and people, refuse to obey and persistently violate these injunctions,—are they right or wrong in so doing?

Prophecy, and mystery, and miracle, have failed with the most thoughtful and intellectual to establish any longer the old claim of Scriptural inspiration. Prayer and faith have lost their alleged potency; they will no longer remove the mountain, heal the sick, or raise the dead; even "God's elect" are quite unwilling to trust these in any emergency. The united prayers of ardent believers of the two greatest Christian nations in the world were lately sent up beseeching the Lord to spare the life of the stricken President of the United States.* The prayers were in vain, for the laws of Nature are inexorable. Continual prayers are offered for monarchs and despots; we implore "for peace in our time," yet we hear on all sides the thunder of war and the clamor of preparations for fresh campaigns. Prayer is the voice of trembling Hope; it is still mainly the resort of the timid and emotional. People at all periods have made prayer a refuge in times of urgent necessity. Statues and images, the sun and the moon, one God, and the trinity of Gods, and "the Queen of Heaven," and saints and angels, and the unknown God, have been and are still invoked, and a kind of relief is obtained by unburdening the heart even to some occult power; but, at the present day, the priest who prays for sunshine or for rain, who fasts and prays that a plague may be stayed, that a tempest may be stilled, or that an earthquake may cease; who appeals to Divine Justice for a blessing on friends or a curse upon enemies, is still,

* President Garfield.

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even with all his pretension to education, civilization,
and refinement, at best but in a state of semi-barbarism.
The only way in which prayer can be of service is when
it is an incentive to exertion for relief, or when it
impels to action in the direction of the prayer itself.

There's a good time coming when wrongs shall be
righted, and when the injustice and venerable abuses of
ages shall be swept away. By means of force and
oppression, not more than a tenth of mankind have
found life worth living; to all the rest it has been
mostly a sad duration of trials, anxieties, trouble,
worry, and deprivation. Could such a deplorable
arrangement ever have been the intention of a benevo-
lent Deity? Impossible! The pitiable result is from
man's own rapacity, as much from pious Christian men
as from any other. The condition of poverty has been
praised by the "Princes of the Church,"—by Popes,
Cardinals, Lord Bishops, wealthy pious pastors, and by
well-to-do comfortable Christians, by men who, perhaps,
on the whole, never knew the want of a meal! Is this
the reason that poverty has actually become more bitter
and extensive in Christian lands than in any other?
The Bible says, "Blessed are the poor," but the poor
may well say that poverty is a curse, which to escape
has made Christian people grasping, violent, and un-
scrupulous, fully establishing the principle that *Might
is Right*.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DAWN.

Our Government in England looks more to the indulgence and glorification of a certain family called "Royal," and to certain classes entitled "Noble," than it does to secure the welfare and encouragement of millions of the so-called humbler people, who are the real bone and sinew of the nation. Enormous incomes have been secured to many who are quite undeserving, and titled voluptuaries monopolize nearly every office of honor or profit,—many of such holding a plurality of offices—to the exclusion of persons of real merit and ability—because of their being in the despised humbler walks of life. Our State Church, with its lordly bishops and dignitaries, contrary to its hypocritical professions, seeks its treasure upon earth, and its rapacity cannot be exceeded by the most grasping potentate. Its ordained high shepherds are shamefully overpaid, and will crave and accept without any conscientious scruple the resources so much needed for a suffering people. State pensioners of every degree, temporal and spiritual, are in swarms in every direction, and at hand with others ready to deplete or grievously reduce any tempting fund needed for humane and benevolent purposes. Place-men holding the highest offices under Government get exorbitant salaries, while many subordinates and many of the real and effective workers are forced to live on the merest pittance. Useless offices are created for favorites, and there is an overcrowding of pampered officials in every department, many of the most worthless becoming permanent burdens on the people.

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But perhaps the greatest evil that has ever afflicted the human family is their deprivation to the full and free use of land. This generous bounty of Nature for all alike has been seized and taken and unscrupulously made merchandize of by rulers and invaders; a wrong which no words can fully characterize. This deprivation is admitted to be the principal cause of poverty and of all the evils which such a condition engenders, and such no doubt it is. Were it possible for some fiend to dwell in malignant thought in order to devise some dread scheme to make this earth a scene of woe and suffering, the crowning infamy would be reached by depriving human beings of the free use of the land. Some fiend has succeeded in accomplishing this object. As it is now, a few individuals, comparatively, own nearly the entire fertile portion of the earth, leaving millions of human creatures virtually disinherited and placed in a state of deplorable dependency.

Man's natural right to the use of the land is just the same as his natural right to the light that shines, to the air he breathes, or to the ocean which by common usage belongs to all, and in reality it would be no greater injustice to deny his prerogative in these than it would be to impeach his common claim to the soil. When a man is deprived of the free use of the soil, or on such terms as may be common to all alike, particularly for the purpose of growing food, this deprivation is an outrage on his natural right as a denizen of the earth, and the main cause of nearly all the destitution which otherwise need not have an existence.

But so-called "vested rights" in the individual ownership of land have, it is said, existed for generations; still, after centuries, they are but vested wrongs, and the statesman or politician who will deny this and persist in sustaining unjust laws which legislate thousands of acres from father to son, or from inheritor to

inheritor, or keep the fertile lands of an entire country subject to any man's will, or allow the lands in vast tracts to be left to the monopoly and disposal of may be a score or even a dozen of rapacious individuals, such statesman or politician is an obstructive to a necessary reform and should be voted out of office at the earliest opportunity. Let the people elect proper representatives, and this great land question can be settled forever.

Great reforms have always been too long delayed, as if antiquated usurpation should not be disturbed uncere- moniously. Temporizing law-makers are still too much inclined to cry, "patience, patience," while thousands are languishing in poverty and disease, mainly in consequence of a deprivation of natural rights, and while other thousands are driven to desperation and crime by this continued wrong and oppression. There should be no delay in applying a remedy, no delay in plucking up pestiferous weeds; there should be no spot on earth left for the footprint of injustice. Human rights should be restored with the least possible delay. He who is inclined to declaim against socialism or communism cannot, with so much human suffering before his eyes, deny it to be the right and the duty of the State to provide at once the best possible remedy towards the alleviation of such distress, even should it be necessary to assume the ownership of the land, reserving the rents and profits of the same for the benefit of the whole community. In such an attempt for the good of all, there are or would be many cases in which reasonable remuneration should be paid by the State to those dispossessed, or divested of ownership; for many have acquired ownership of land by hard earnings specially saved for such purpose.

This exercise of its prerogative by the State would undoubtedly be the proper and legitimate remedy for the restoration of natural rights, one in advance of all

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others, and certainly the most likely of any other to be effectual. Such an act of stern justice is demanded by the voice of bereaved millions, and it is one which in spite of any false sentiment as to private ownership of land is by some arrangement sooner or later to take place. This indispensable remedy may, it is admitted, be a harsh one, and many will so consider it; but property delivered up to the Government for the benefit of all will to a certain extent be compensative. In order to do strict justice, there can be no other alternative; "vested rights" are doomed, and the vast concourse of suffering poor must be saved from any further destitution. To be plain, that which has been feloniously or otherwise unlawfully seized and taken must be given up for the use and benefit of the whole community. The rents or profits of land instead of being claimed for the support or enrichment of a comparative few, as at present, will be equally shared for the benefit of all. Such an adjustment will be opposed, as all other great reforms have been resisted, but the demand is imperative, and when humane restitution shall have been sanctioned, what a change from our present pandemonium to one approaching earthly felicity! This is no wild dream, for when pauperism is thus practically exterminated there will be no more pampered classes, drones will have to labor, and the progress of mankind will be assured. In that happy period there will be no daily anguish in the struggle with bitter poverty, no further desperate resources to make a living, no degrading tampering with virtue and honor to secure daily bread, but there will be a powerful incentive to industry; for every man who wills it can, without let or hinderance, have a fair portion of land to cultivate; there will be homes and plenty for all, and life will no longer be a scene of misery to millions. Let some mighty phalanx rise and hurl destitution from the earth!

When this condition is assured by the best available method, and when men follow no longer the dictates of a Divinity who has sanctioned blood and slaughter, may it not be reasonable to expect that war, the next great curse of the human race, will be abolished, and that there will be no more costly armaments but such as may be sufficient and necessary for united nations to compel non-conforming rulers or despots, who would still use brutal force, to submit to the arbitrament of more humane Governments? With fewer potentates, with fewer Governments, with fewer national divisions and subdivisions, the world would be more easily directed, and there would be more unity and peace among men.

What shall the future bring? When the minds of able men, of great inventors, discoverers, and benefactors, are released from the pre-occupation of the painful problems of national destitution and slaughter, and their talents and abilities obtain free scope in beneficent directions, it may be no Utopian idea to predict that further wonderful discoveries will reveal many of the mysteries of Nature by which disease will be greatly lessened, health secured, and life lengthened; that we may be better able to control winds and storms, perhaps safely to navigate the air, and live under circumstances now considered impossible; that the heat of the sun may be utilized for ordinary purposes; that the powers of Nature, electricity, and other natural forces will be made more subservient; and that general knowledge will so increase as further to exalt and humanize our ideas respecting morality, and enable us to ignore nationality, so that all races of men can in the truest sense be recognized as brethren, and the universal wish prevail for peace on earth, and a caution proclaimed throughout the world, thus—"Those whom Nature has joined together let no man put asunder."

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